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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
DIARY OF THE WEEK ...	329	The Liberal Press in Scotland.	
POLITICS AND AFFAIRS:—		By Scottish Liberal ...	347
The Crisis and a Way Out ...	332	The late Mr. Pete Ourran. By	
The Advantage of a Single		Joseph Clayton ...	348
Issue ...	333	The Secrecy of the Ballot.	
A Futile Controversy ...	334	By K. E. F. Wilkinson and	
An Egyptian Terrorist ...	336	William T. Lee ...	348
LIFE AND LETTERS:—		POETRY:—	
The Two Englands ...	337	Some Old Chinese Songs. Ren-	
King's English ...	339	dered into English by David	
"Chopin Villa" ...	340	Wilson ...	348
The Ferment ...	341	THE WORLD OF BOOKS ...	350
SHORT STUDIES:—		REVIEWS:—	
The Finder. By W. H. Davies	342	Religion without Metaphysics	351
MUSIC:—		The Conservative as Critic of	
Strauss and his "Elektra."		Poetry ...	352
By Ernest Newman ...	343	Where only Man is Vile ...	354
THE DRAMA:—		The Great Mimic ...	354
Penology and Pyrotechny. By		Stories of East and West ...	356
William Archer ...	344	BOOKS IN BRIEF:—	
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:—		Nature Photography for Begin-	
A Forgotten Analogy. By Sir		ners ...	358
Francis A. Channing, M.P. ...	346	THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By	
The Next Step in Women's		Lucellum ...	360
Suffrage. By E. S. Hooper.			
Winifred Holiday. "Suffra-			
gist." W. R. Snow, and			
Clementina Black ...	346		

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Diary of the Week.

PARLIAMENT was opened by the Sovereign on Mon-
day, and the Session inaugurated with a Speech which
opened up a wide vista of bewilderment for the Liberal
Party. Save for the reference to the opening of the
South African Parliament by the Prince of Wales, a
mention of Lord Morley's scheme of Indian reforms, the
promise of a substantial increase in the cost of the Navy,
and a hint of financial confusion, the speech was confined
to the topic of the Lords, and this was so far satisfactory.

BUT its language was neither clear nor even
grammatical. The situation was described in two para-
graphs. The first declared that "serious difficulties"
existed between the two parties of the legislature. The
second announced that proposals would be made, with all
convenient speed, to secure the undivided authority of
the Commons over finance, and its predominance in legis-
lation. This pointed to an anti-veto Bill, but the
paragraph proceeded to sketch a scheme for the reform
of the Lords. Its phrasing ran as follows:—

"These measures, in the opinion of my advisers,
should provide that this House should be so constituted
and empowered as to exercise impartially, in regard to
proposed legislation, the functions of initiation, revision,
and, subject to proper safeguards, of delay."

The words "this House" would in the natural sense
refer to the Commons, but they were spoken of the Lords,
and obviously related to that assembly. A more serious
confusion has arisen from the words "constituted and
empowered," which suggest that the constitution of the
House of Lords, as well as its relation to the Commons,
has been under review by the Cabinet.

THIS would seem to be the case, and it is probable
that the view of at least a section of the Cabinet, led
by Sir Edward Grey, was conveyed by Colonel Seely,

who is seeking election at Ilkeston in Sir Walter
Foster's place, and with greater crudeness by Mr. Pease,
on whose behalf Sir William Holland has resigned. Mr.
Pease, indeed, omitted all reference to the Veto, and
had the assurance to say that the Government would
proceed with "the great Bill of this Session, the recon-
stitution of the House of Lords." Colonel Seely pro-
posed, in brief, to set up a small Second Chamber or
Senate. It was to be elected by the same constituencies
as the House of Commons, and any elector would be
eligible for it, the hereditary element being completely
abolished. In cases of difficulty with the House of
Commons, the two Chambers would sit and vote to-
gether, the calculation being that, by this machinery,
and by the democratic character of the body, all but
very small majorities of the Commons would eventually
get their way.

WE argue the question of a re-constituted Chamber
elsewhere, but we note that the moment it was hinted at
a strong force of opposition from the Radicals was
developed. Sir Charles Dilke presided over a meeting
of members who asked for concentration on the Veto,
and saw the Prime Minister, while Sir Henry Dalziel
gave notice of the following amendment to the Govern-
ment's motion for taking the whole time of the House:—

"That inasmuch as no mandate has been received
from the electorate for any reform or reconstruction
of the House of Lords, this House declines to grant
any facilities for discussion of any resolutions having
that object in view."

ON Thursday there was a meeting of Liberal mem-
bers representing Northern constituencies—the backbone
of the Parliamentary Party—and also of the Liberal
members for Scotland. It is understood that both
these gatherings revealed an overwhelming majority in
favor of the policy which aims at the destruction
of the Veto and against a scheme of reconstruction.
We believe, indeed, that only two members—one at each
gathering—expressed any convinced belief in the latter
policy. Indeed, it is already clear that if the Govern-
ment pursues it, it is doomed. One mistake has been
made; another would be fatal. The vital purpose of
the Ministry must be to preserve the unity of the
party, and the simultaneous and harmonious action of
its allies.

WE are sure that Mr. Asquith is alive to this
necessity, and equally sure that it cannot be attained by
even the best devised and most democratic form of
Constitution-mongering. On this point his statement to
the Trade Congress Deputation seems to us clear and
satisfactory. "They could not," he said, "get electoral
reform as long as they had an Assembly which was
determined not to give it to them, and that Assembly
had the power of defeating the legislation of their
representatives. As he had said, the condition precedent
to the attainment of any of these reforms was the settle-
ment of that great question"—that is the Veto. Mean-
while, Lord Rosebery proposes that the Lords should
constitute themselves immediately into a Committee for
reforming themselves, and plan after plan of change

pours from the Tory Press. A clear warning to Liberals not to do likewise.

A PROFOUND sensation has been caused by the Prime Minister's speech in supporting the Address. Mr. Asquith, while declaring that this Parliament was devoted to the restoring of the supremacy of the Commons over finance, and to destroying the legislative Veto of the Lords, gave a rendering of his Albert Hall speech which seemed to his audience to take from the Parliament all hope of effecting those purposes. He explained that his reference was to statutory safeguards, not to the exercise of the Royal prerogative:—

"I tell the House quite frankly," said Mr. Asquith, "that I have received no such guarantees, and that I have asked for no such guarantees. In my judgment it is the duty of statesmen and of responsible politicians in this country as long as possible and as far as possible to keep the name of the Sovereign and the prerogatives of the Crown outside the domain of party politics. If the occasion should arise I should not hesitate to tender such advice to the Crown as in the circumstances the exigencies of the situation appear to warrant in the public interests. But to ask in advance for a blank authority for an indefinite exercise of the Royal prerogative in regard to a measure which has never been submitted to or approved by the House of Commons is a thing which, in my judgment, no constitutional statesman can properly make, and it is a concession which the Sovereign cannot be expected to grant."

PROBABLY Mr. Asquith said less than he might have said, for we believe that the question of guarantees has been mentioned to the King, at least since the election. But the bare limitation of the Albert Hall speech struck a chill through the Ministerial ranks, and the rest of Mr. Asquith's speech, which announced that the Government would first proceed by resolutions introduced in the Commons, but not in the Lords, that the Budget was to be carried at a later period, and that there would be immediate steps for settling the financial confusion, was heard almost in silence. Incidentally Mr. Asquith mentioned that there was a deficiency of twenty-five millions in the returns of income tax.

THE speech was at once criticised by Mr. Redmond, who, proclaiming his independence of British parties, declined to accept Mr. Asquith's reading of his Albert Hall pledge, or his outline of Ministerial policy. He thought the natural meaning of the earlier speech was that the Prime Minister would not assume or hold office unless he saw his way to the passing of a Bill dealing with the veto, of course with the help of the Royal prerogative. On that reading of the pledge, said Mr. Redmond, the election was fought, and no hint was given to a contrary effect. In particular, the Irish Party had been organised on the understanding that the Government were not prepared to accept responsibility for carrying on until this question was settled. He admitted, however, that there was force in Mr. Asquith's plea that, as things stood, the Sovereign could not promise to create peers in favor of a Bill he had not seen. If that was so, the Government's plan should be produced without a moment's delay, or simultaneous resolutions, as THE NATION suggested last week, might be introduced in the Commons and in the Lords. When these resolutions had been passed in one House and thrown out in the other, the King would be seized of the situation, and the Government could act.

THIS speech, significantly cheered by Liberal and Radical members, threw the whole situation in doubt.

Mr. Redmond had practically told the Government that it must either be "Veto first" or an appeal for guarantees, and that, if neither course were taken, he would not support the Budget. The Irish pressure was re-enforced on the following day by Mr. Wm. O'Brien. This revenant from the old Home Rule battles appeared as an almost avowed Conservative force. He declared that he had come to Westminster to destroy the Budget, which would make Home Rule a curse instead of a blessing, and standing as a prophet of a new peasant proprietary, Conservative and Protectionist, offered an eirenicon to the Tory Unionists. Mr. O'Brien's speech may give the Tories a fresh ally, but it may fatally divide the Irish urban vote in Great Britain, which is democratic, from that of the new landowners under the Wyndham Act. In the later speeches of the debate, Mr. Redmond's attitude, as distinguished from Mr. O'Brien's, was supported by Radicals like Mr. Belloc, who spoke with striking brilliancy of phrasing, and by Liberal moderates like Sir Albert Spicer.

THE Protectionist case was revived on Wednesday by Mr. Austen Chamberlain in an official Opposition amendment rehearsing the usual formulæ of Tariff Reform, and endeavoring to catch the Irish vote. It was rejected on Thursday night by 285 votes to 254—a majority of 31. The two sections of the Irish Nationalists abstained, but the majority would have reached forty but for five vacant Liberal seats and the accidental absence of four Labor members. Mr. Chamberlain's speech was a rehearsal of ancient and more extreme Protectionist legends, unaccompanied by any kind of supporting evidence. On the other side were Mr. Buxton's statements as to the official prices of German bread under the import duties, Mr. Runciman's powerful exposition of the policy of open ports, Mr. Mond's riddling of the coarser Protectionist arguments, and Mr. Lloyd George's illustrations, from official German reports, of the way in which the poorer German workmen are driven by high prices on to food repellent to our people.

BUT the gem of the debate was Mr. Balfour's revelations of the truth of Mr. Kettle's jibe that the object of the Protectionists' amendment was to nail not their flag, but their leader, to the mast. As usual, Mr. Balfour alternately submitted to his bonds and tried to break through them. He practically unsaid all the wilder electioneering assertions of the Tariff Reformers—his own included. Thus he admitted (a) that it was not his view that all protective duties would be paid by the foreigner; (b) that it was "only a speculation" that Colonial preferences would result in reducing the price of bread; (c) that he could not "promise" that there would be no increase in the price of food as the result of food taxes; (d) that he had never held Tariff Reform to be a cure for unemployment. Having thus taken all the fuel out of the Protectionist engine, Mr. Balfour proceeded to pretend to drive it full speed ahead. One or two of the new Tory members showed some zeal and freshness in the Protectionist cause, which their great leader may be trusted to extinguish.

THE wheel of events in Thibet has turned full circle, and its theocratic ruler, the Dalai Lama, who fled to China, a refugee from a British invasion, is now a fugitive in British India from Chinese pursuers. It is not possible as yet to understand the causes of what has happened.

The Dalai Lama, after Lord Curzon's expedition, fled first to Urga, in Mongolia, and then to Peking, where he remained up to last year. Meanwhile the Chinese suzerainty had become a reality, and the Chinese garrison had been largely increased. The troops were apparently non-Buddhist, and are said to have looted monasteries and killed Lamas. What exactly happened in Lhasa we do not know, nor is it clear whether there was only a contest between Chinese and Tibetans, or also a civil strife among the Tibetans themselves. But the Dalai Lama was driven from his capital and pursued to the Indian frontier by a force of 2,000 Chinese troops. He has now appealed to Lord Minto for protection, while two Tibetan envoys who accompanied him are addressing a complaint to the Chinese Government.

* * *

It is fairly clear that this is a situation which does not directly concern us, or call for our intervention. By the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, and later by the Anglo-Russian Convention, the suzerainty of China was recognised, we might almost say re-established. The civil power has come to blows with the religious power, as was indeed inevitable, and the theocracy has been worsted. Chinese rule cannot be worse than that of the Lamas, though it would be proper, if the allegations as to the brutality of the Chinese troops are well-founded, that our Minister should address an informal remonstrance to the Chinese Government. It remains to be seen whether the flight of the Buddhist pontiff will mean the migration of the central seat of Buddhism to its original home in India. If that were to happen, it might conceivably mean a partial reformation of an unspeakably corrupt cult, and even, as some Imperialist writers already reckon, its subjection to British influences. But the prestige of the Tibetan priesthood is already low, and its authority very doubtful in countries where Buddhism has continued to be a spiritual religion. A Buddhist Pope in a British Avignon would not be likely to increase his power.

* * *

ON Sunday, the Egyptian Prime Minister, Boutros Pasha Ghali, was shot by a young Nationalist chemist, Ibrahim Wardany, and died on Monday from his wounds. A Copt by religion, Boutros Pasha had behind him a long official record as Foreign and Finance Minister. He was a respectable, but not a strong, personality, and had lent himself as President to the proceedings of the Denshawai court-martial. The assassin, who was at once captured, is a Nationalist of some standing, and had studied chemistry at Lausanne. He is said (though this is denied) to have been the Secretary of the Young Egyptian Congress held last year at Geneva, and to have acted as correspondent to "El Lewa," the Nationalist organ. Numerous arrests were made after the murder, but few of them have been maintained. Wardany denies that he had accomplices, and there is no reason to suppose that he acted for his party. The Ministry has been remodelled, with the minimum of change, under Mohammed Said Bey.

* * *

THE details of the new Constitution which has been granted to Bosnia-Herzegovina are now known. They are fairly liberal, and may well excite the envy of the Slav races which find themselves under Magyar rather than Austrian rule. The general provisions for the liberty of the subject will be those which obtain in Austria proper. The Diet will have full competence in all domestic questions, the affairs of the common army,

tariffs, and the like being naturally beyond its scope. It will consist of seventy-two elected and twenty nominated members, of whom fifteen will be the heads of the three religious communities. The electors are subdivided first according to creed, and then according to property, into landowners, urban, and rural voters. The Orthodox Serbs will have thirty-one seats, the Mohammedans twenty-four, the Catholics sixteen, and the Jews one. An interesting provision is that women who are qualified as landowners or large tax-payers may exercise the franchise through a deputy—the universal practice in feudal times. The apparent Liberalism of these provisions is not, perhaps, so startling as it seems. The Austrian officials doubtless reckon on ruling by the divisions of their subjects.

* * *

AN experiment, painfully suggestive of decadence, is about to be tried in Algeria. The French Chamber, by an overwhelming majority, has authorised the employment there of a battalion of black Senegalese infantry, which may afterwards be increased to three. It is hoped that, if the experiment succeeds, the whole of the 19th Army Corps may be transferred to the Eastern Frontier of France, and that in time of war the defence of Algeria might be left wholly to black troops. M. Jaurès and his followers raised an ineffectual protest. The consequences of a dwindling birth-rate in France are evident, and they are being faced without false pride.—The chief event of the week in Paris has been the passing on M. Hervé, the anti-militarist leader, of the savage sentence of four months' imprisonment. In the course of a Press campaign against the corruption and brutality of the police, more especially the "Police des Mœurs," he remarked that a man whose women relatives had been insulted by this branch of the police would do well to imitate Liabeuf, the "Apache" who shot a policeman to avenge a wrongful imprisonment. The incitement is indefensible, but the punishment, deliberately pronounced, will anger large bodies of French opinion.

* * *

PHILADELPHIA has witnessed, during the week, one of those peculiarly savage strikes which are the spasmodic answer of labor to the growing power of trusts and corporations. Six thousand tramwaymen struck against a company which owes its privileges to the dubious manoeuvres of a political ring. The company made an effort to run its cars with non-union labor, to which the men replied by burning or blowing up some 300 cars. One hundred persons are said to have been injured by explosions or in encounters with the police. A sympathetic general strike of all the organised labor of the city has been threatened. Meanwhile, a decision by a Connecticut court in a trade boycott case has created a situation analogous to that produced by our own Taff Vale judgment. Labor unions may now be sued for damages due to boycotting, which is pronounced "a criminal conspiracy in restraint of trade."

* * *

WE regret to note the death of Mr. Arthur Walter, the fourth and, we are afraid, the last member of the dynasty which founded and controlled the "Times." In 1894 Mr. Walter succeeded his father, the famous member for Berkshire, and the third of the Walters, as manager and chief proprietor; and in 1908 exchanged this position for that of chairman of the "Times" Publishing Company. We suppose that with his death the line of the Walters comes to an end, and that of the Harmsworths begins.

Politics and Affairs.

THE CRISIS AND A WAY OUT.

READERS of THE NATION will have been fully prepared for the grave events which have followed the Prime Minister's reading on Monday of the conditions for his tenure of office which he laid down, with great emphasis, in his Albert Hall speech. Those conditions were endorsed, with equal or greater clearness, by many of his colleagues; and there was, we think, an almost universal interpretation of their significance. Nor was this interpretation merely formal, for the majority was gathered together, and the party wrought to a high pitch of encouragement and enthusiasm, by the pledge which Mr. Asquith's words were thought to contain. What was that pledge? The Prime Minister said that he would not "assume" office and would not "hold" office unless he had secured "safeguards" for the "legislative utility and honor of the party of progress." Mr. Asquith stated on Monday that the guarantees which he had in mind were merely legislative, that he had not sought the Sovereign's aid and had not received it, and that it was unconstitutional to ask the King to exercise his prerogative in favor of a Bill which the House of Commons had never seen or discussed. This is hardly a complete statement of the case. Even if the Liberal and Labor and Irish Parties were wrong, their error had grave results in policy. It led them to hope for at least some decisive result to the election, if it were favorable to Liberalism. Either the party could go forward with some assurance of an issue, or, failing the assistance of the Crown, it could throw the whole responsibility for the constitutional deadlock on the body that had caused it, and, refusing all further share in the King's Counsels, could face the final defeat of the Peers with calm certainty. Indeed, it is clear that, if it had not entertained this view, it could not have approved a Dissolution which merely condemned the succeeding Parliament to a fruitless struggle. It would have preferred to use the constitutional powers latent in the House of Commons for forcing the Budget on the House of Lords. It thought, therefore, that Mr. Asquith had gone to the King with some such proposition as this: "Sir, the House of Lords have rendered party government impossible. There is no further hope of fair play for us. They will not look at our measures even if we return with our present majority, still less if it is reduced. Therefore, I come to you. The Constitution provides for your intervention in the case in which the House of Lords repeatedly sets itself against the will of the House of Commons. Here is my plan for dealing with its absolute veto, which is now seen to be inconsistent with anything like an equal balance between the two parties. If I am returned to power with a sufficient majority, will you give me your support? If you cannot, the Liberal Party will be forced out of the constitutional system, and your Throne must seek support only from statesmen who can deal with the House of Lords, and can form Governments whose measures will be fairly treated by them." The precise

terms of Mr. Asquith's speech suggested that on these lines he had hope of an issue.

This, therefore, was the general interpretation placed upon Mr. Asquith's words. The Prime Minister must, we are sure, see that no other was reasonably possible. If, as is now suggested, only legislative guarantees were meant, his followers, realising that fact, would have answered, "But you are condemning us to a fresh ploughing of the sands. Is this General Election, to which you have invited us, to go for nought? Has the King no part to play; or is there no remedy but revolution for the action of the Lords?" If we come to the language of his Albert Hall speech, and to Mr. Lloyd George's still more precise speech at the National Liberal Club, we see at once the difficulty of restricting his pledge to the promise to introduce a Bill into the House of Commons. Supposing the Prime Minister had been defeated at this election, and had assumed office as the result of a following contest. How could he pass a Bill before he formed a Government? And, conversely, if he had come back with a majority, not of 124, but of 400, would he have declared it unconstitutional to ask the King for guarantees? We cannot think so. The Prime Minister, we are sure, intended no deception, and, when he spoke on Monday, meant, we imagine, that the verdict of the electors was too inconclusive to admit of that resort to the Crown which he did not exclude from his general plan of campaign, and did hint as a later development of it. Let us, therefore, try to re-knit the unravelled situation, and see what prospect it contains of a substantial realisation of Mr. Asquith's original lead.

And first, though the spirit of the party has been damped, and its confidence in its leaders shaken, its purpose is not abated, nor has the chance of attaining it been destroyed. The breach with the Irish and the Labor Parties has arisen merely on a question of tactics, and outside the Government there is not a member of the majority who would have any hesitation in pursuing a vigorous policy of attack on the Lords. This may be said with equal confidence of the country. At the least computation the anti-Lords majority exceeded 400,000 votes. Had the issue been fought on the peers alone, both parties agree that the plurality would have been overwhelming. Consciousness of this fact is visible in our opponents' tactics. While we hesitate to attack the Peers, and doubt about our strategy, the Tory army of defence has struck its tents and is already in full retreat. A secret caucus of the Lords is sitting at this moment with the object of devising in raw haste a scheme of reform. The Tory papers of all shades of opinion are tumbling over each other in their zeal to produce some plausible alternative to a House full of elements that cannot stand criticism. One proposes a mixture of nomination, election, and the hereditary principle; another would combine nomination and heredity; while a third abandons heredity altogether. The "Observer," admitting the whole Liberal case, frankly gives up a House that pretends to be a plain-sailing Chamber of revision, and in that dress simply scuttles Liberal measures. Lord Rosebery, quick to seize the mood of the hour, calls on the House of Lords

to constitute itself into a Committee of Safety for itself before the Easter Recess. Everywhere there is movement in this Valley of Dry Bones, on the evening of an election which, according to the Opposition, settles nothing in particular. Compare this feverish stir with the haughty refusal of the Lords two generations ago even to consider the question of life peerages. The situation resembles the competition between the two parties over Reform in the 'sixties, when Disraeli threw over fancy franchises and laid the basis of a democratic suffrage. The moral for Liberalism is as clear to-day as it was then. The party which stands firmest to the principles of representative government will win. That way and no way else lies the true path.

It seems to us, therefore, that it would be a scandalous defeat of the representative principle if through mere differences as to procedure the signal verdict of last month, invoked as it was by the Prime Minister's address, and weightier in character even than in numbers, were ignored. Neither party desires a second election; every group and segment of a group in the Commons deprecates it. So long as the miracle of 1906 was not repeated, such an election might not produce a settlement, while it sowed a plentiful crop of exasperated feelings. And, on the other hand, all the various constituents of the majority—Radicals, Nationalists, Labor men—desire to give this Parliament its voice in the controversy, and only differ among themselves because the Lords seem likely to stifle that voice, as they muffled its predecessor. On his side, the King must welcome a clearance of an issue which threatens, either for himself or for his successor, the loss of the system which keeps his throne propped by two equally powerful forces, saves it from the jar of direct contact with the popular will, and yet allows it to sun itself in the favor of all men. Is there not a means of reconciling all these aims and interests?

There seems to us to be one such plan, and that is through an *ad hoc* Referendum. The general method of the Referendum has been much canvassed in this country, and has received support both from Radical thinkers and from Conservative politicians. On the whole, it seems to us unsuited to our normal Constitution, for it is calculated to weaken and eventually to destroy the principle of Ministerial responsibility to the Commons, on which our system of Government mainly rests. The loss of the absolute veto of the peers must necessarily be linked with a scheme for shorter Parliaments, which in its turn gives us a fair approach to the Referendum. But a special application of the principle does seem suited to an emergency like the present, arising from a definite, simple issue, almost insoluble by the mixed appeal of a General Election, and yet urgently called for by the existing majority. Mr. Chamberlain, indeed, thought that it might fittingly decide the question of a tariff. Its advantages as an immediate solution of our present difficulties are clear. It gets rid of the immense disturbance of a second election, with its creaking, cumbrous, costly, and highly irritating machinery. It enables an immediate appeal to be made to the Prerogative on more moderate lines than a request for an immediate and large creation of Peers. Also, it sets

the House of Lords face to face with the tribunal before which it professes to bow while continually evading the practical results involved in the return of a Liberal Government. Finally, the Referendum is easily put in operation. Probably it might involve a short amendment of the Ballot Act. But in substance a Referendum, for this occasion only, could be set in motion by Letters Patent—that is to say, by using the power under which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government shaped the South African Constitution. The same device is in fairly constant use for high ecclesiastical or legal appointments, and it represents a normal and regular resort to the Prerogative, existing as a useful supplement to Parliamentary institutions. The Referendum cannot, indeed, over-ride statute law, but if a small supporting Act were necessary, we cannot imagine the Lords resisting it. Would they "refer" a Budget without the existence of any machinery for a regular examination of a complicated set of taxes, and could they refuse to "refer" a simple subject, carefully defined beforehand, and restricted to so intelligible an issue as the Veto? If they did, such hypocrisy would be its own condemnation, and the way would be cleared for any straight and simple dealing with them.

Let us assume, therefore, that the Government decides to make this Parliament an effective organ for settling the question of the Lords. We have a right to assume that this is its intention, and, indeed, by the confession of the King's Speech, this is the only reason for its existence, as well as the one condition of support from its Labor and Irish allies. If it sees no means of giving prompt and powerful effect to the firm will and passionate desire of its supporters in Parliament and out of it, its duty is to resign. In our opinion such a means exists. It is an unusual method, but it is a direct and fruitful one, for if a Veto Bill or Resolution passes the House of Commons by an adequate majority, and then receives the confirming votes of, say, half-a-million to a million voices, the call for full action by the Crown on a recalcitrant House of Lords would be imperative. Mr. Asquith's speech, as we said, reserves the point of a final appeal to the Crown. Could it be made with greater force than after a successful Referendum? Such a prospect would relieve the majority of the angry sense of futility which Monday's speech aroused. Ministers owe it to their Parliamentary followers to remove this weight. Still more do they owe it to the hundreds of thousands of workers outside. These men's devotion to democracy gloriously withstood the pressure of wealth and social power, and it was mainly sustained on this issue of the Lords. Their only petition to their leaders is for the means of giving effect to a profound conviction, and of lifting from our Constitution a burden that will assuredly sink it. Unless their appeal is responded to, the forces of progress may be destroyed, and cannot but be disintegrated and depressed.

THE ADVANTAGE OF A SINGLE ISSUE.

BEFORE the country can be consulted on the constitutional issue it is very necessary that the form in which that issue is to be presented should be carefully thought

out and finally determined. The question has not been suddenly sprung upon us. It is more than three years since the rejection of two Government Bills brought the relation between the Houses into the forefront of politics. The Government, which was continuous and substantially identical with the present Government, carefully considered the alternative possibilities, and, after mature consideration, decided that the point to attack was not the constitution of the House of Lords, but the power of Veto. This line of attack on the Lords had been gathering strength in the Liberal Party for many years. It was advocated by Lord Herschell and John Bright, and it was accepted by the National Liberal Federation, almost with unanimity, at a great meeting in 1904. This unanimity was a great point gained, and it unquestionably weighed with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government. They put forward proposals for the limitation of the veto, and introduced them in a resolution which was carried by a large majority in the House of Commons. Time passed, and the controversy became more acute. The position was repeatedly discussed, and still the limitation of the veto held the field. The Budget was rejected, and the position of the Government was announced at the Albert Hall. It was still the veto which was before the country, only now in a more extended form. The Lords had pushed their pretensions further, and claimed authority in the region of finance. This only made it necessary to extend the counter-policy by providing for the complete abolition of the financial veto together with the restriction of the veto on legislation. Still not a word was heard of reconstitution. It was not till the electoral fight was well under way that we heard of a Minister mentioning the subject of reform, and it is safe to say that the overwhelming majority of Mr. Asquith's supporters told their constituents that the veto of the Lords was the point of controversy, and that any proposal for the reconstitution of the Upper House must await its settlement. It is, therefore, with some bewilderment that the prominence given to the constitution of the Second Chamber in the King's Speech has been received, a bewilderment which, we fear, would give way to quite another state of mind if the actual proposal of the Government should be found to entangle the relatively simple question of the veto with the controversial coil involved in any scheme of reconstruction.

The first duty of the Government, then, is to avoid this pitfall. We are well aware that, in the abstract, a cogent argument may be set up for a renovated Second Chamber. It may be plausibly represented, not without force, as a more far-reaching scheme than the mere limitation of the Veto. Let us assume it to be, for the sake of argument, as democratic and as far-reaching as possible. Let us assume that it would involve the complete elimination of the hereditary principle, the election of a small Second Chamber by a constituency at least as wide as the present, and at the same time some mechanism to secure, by joint representation, the last word on all subjects to the House of Commons. If these conditions be not sufficient, let anyone add to them as he pleases, and conceive that we have the most

popular Second Chamber that can be devised. Such a scheme would be far more sweeping than that adopted during the last Parliament. Would it, therefore, be more acceptable? Three distinct and decisive considerations lead to a negative answer. The first is that it would probably encounter the determined opposition of those whose ultimate ideal is a Single Chamber, and who would rather persist with the weak and discredited body that at present exercises an arbitrary Veto than proceed to the constitution of a new and strong body firmly rooted in the representative principle. In point of fact, it was experience of the impossibility of obtaining agreement upon the lines of reconstruction which led the Government in 1907 to concentration on the Veto. There is no reason to think that those difficulties would be less to-day. Beyond this, there is the radical and, in our view, the true and sound objection that a body thus framed would tend to overshadow the authority of the House of Commons, and ultimately present to it a rival force, superficially attractive by reason of its apparent intellectuality, but really concentrating all the most conservative elements in the country. Neither Irish Nationalism nor English Laborism would take one step forward in such a direction.

The second reason is that one scheme, and only one scheme, has been before the country. Everywhere the Veto has been argued by Liberal and Labor candidates, everywhere voters have been asked to concentrate on that point alone, and in many places it cannot be doubted that those who would normally have supported Labor candidates have sacrificed their preferences for the sake of one object, which was represented to them as simple and supreme. There are plenty of alternative ways of handling the question. But none of these have been before the country, and for leaders who have put one scheme before the country, and have won on it, to change after the victory and substitute another would be a course calculated to undermine their authority.

This brings us at once to the third objection, which is that any scheme of reconstruction must be an involved and complicated affair. Hence to the supporters of the Government it means another big Bill after the model of the last Parliament, another long drawn out series of discussions, and at the end—summary execution. It means the familiar process of ploughing the sands, and neither Liberals, nor Labor men nor Irishmen are in the mood to plough the sands. True, as we have shown above, the Referendum might save it from this fate. But that process, if linked with an elaborate scheme of reform, would only come at the end of long, wearying, and uncertain controversy. After what has passed the opponents of the House of Lords and, most particularly, the Irish will require a more immediate and decisive test. What they demand is the production of the promised scheme for the limitation of the Veto, free from dilatory complications, and an immediate decision on the question. On such a decision the destiny of the Government would doubtless have to be staked. But if beaten, the democratic parties would still remain a fighting force, united in pursuit of a common object. They would not have suffered the more deadly injury of internal distrust and open discredit.

The immediate object of the Government must be to restore confidence—that is to say, to prove to all its supporters that it means to persist in the attack announced at the Albert Hall. It must prove to those who put the constitutional question above all others that to support the Government is the way, and the only way, to get the constitutional question settled. With this object it will do well, in our opinion, to embody its proposals for the double limitation of the Veto in a resolution from which all extraneous matter is excluded, and to submit that resolution to the judgment of both Houses. Assuming, as is probable, that that resolution is adopted by a large majority in the one House and rejected in the other, the situation arises which Mr. Asquith postulates as the necessary condition for approaching the problem of a constitutional settlement of the divergence between the Houses. If the problem were handled in such a way as to convince all parties of the sincerity of the Government, the immediate difficulties would, we believe, be overcome.

A FUTILE CONTROVERSY.

A MORE wanton waste of Parliamentary time than this week's debate on Tariff Reform can hardly be conceived. For Protectionists the prospect is definitely worse, not better, than when this same straggling and inconsistent amendment was debated a year ago. We were then in the trough of a trade depression with its accompanying unemployment. Upon these misfortunes of their country Tariff Reformers built great hopes, now dashed to the ground by the trade revival which is visible in almost every quarter. The General Election has, indeed, placed in the House of Commons a larger body of professed Protectionists, but the disastrous failure of their attempt to break the solidarity of the industrial North must have brought dismay to those among them endowed with any measure of political sagacity. In more adventurous moments Tariff Reformers have turned to Ireland as a natural ally in their adventure. But Irish Protectionism is an integral part of Irish Nationalism, as Mr. Kettle pointed out. Unless Mr. Austen Chamberlain and his friends are willing to concede an even further measure of Home Rule than Liberals at present contemplate, giving Ireland the right to levy a 10 per cent. import duty upon English goods, no such deal is possible.

With pompous formality Mr. Austen Chamberlain paraded the false assertions and fallacious reasoning which have been ringing in our ears from a thousand platforms. There was the same audacious "talk" about unemployment as "a chronic, continuous symptom of our social system," due to Free Trade, from which Protectionist nations are free, and for which a tariff would furnish a remedy! Agriculture and the great industries are affording less proportionate employment to our people than formerly; capital, needed here, is flowing abroad, to which Mr. Mackinder adds the statement that labor is following capital in its journey overseas. Protection does not favor trusts, and if it does, a national is better than an international trust. Such is the staple of an argument consisting entirely of unproved and unprovable assertions.

Tariff Reform, we are still assured, will increase the volume of British production by keeping out foreign goods. It will also raise our revenue by letting in foreign goods. The foreigner will pay the tax, and so prices will not be raised to our consumers, but profits will be larger for our home producers in agriculture and manufacture, because, though they charge no higher prices than before, they will earn profits on a larger turnover. For, though foreign goods must still flow in to yield a revenue, they must stay out in order to secure to us our home market. Though the price of wheat must rise in order to give a profitable stimulus to Colonial and British agriculture (the Colonies being, apparently, exempt from the economic law that the foreigner pays the tax), the price of bread must remain as before. If, however, the price of bread did rise, "your food," as a whole, would not cost you more, because the present food taxes could be remitted, though we observe that on this somewhat delicate topic Mr. Chamberlain did not dwell, preferring to plunge his audience into the trivialities of an impracticable comparison between German and British standards of living.

Mr. Buxton and other speakers patiently pricked these sophisms of Mr. Chamberlain with pointed facts. The worst unemployment remains in shipbuilding and the building trades, which Protection can only touch to damage. The average price for wheat in Germany last December showed an excess over the English price of 12s. 5d. for imported wheat, 14s. for native wheat, showing that the home producer charged the consumer not merely with the addition of the duty, but with a considerable surplus. But effective as these answers are, it seems hardly suitable that our House of Commons, at a time when it is confronted with such grave issues of immediate moment, should occupy itself with such vain and irrelevant discussion. For seven years we have had these debates going on, with no real attempt on the part of Tariff Reformers to defend their logic or their fictions: shifted from one position they move to another, and when the other is made untenable they simply shift back again. They have taken no steps towards securing any one of their argumentative bases. They have never attempted to prove how a tariff can increase the aggregate of employment in the protected area; or how it can keep more capital in the country; how the foreigner can be made to pay, or what form his payment takes; how Protection can secure the home market and retain our profitable export trade; or why it is more advantageous for us to take the payment for our exports in more raw material and less foreign manufactured goods than at present. With brazen effrontery they lay down these theoretical propositions, and proceed to build upon them elaborate edifices of fiscal policy. But they never endeavor seriously to defend them. Why? Because all this argumentation belongs, not to the substance, but to the rhetorical decoration of their case. There may be honestly convinced Tariff Reformers among our semi-educated classes, never trained to think; country clergymen, half-pay officers, a scattering of university men, country gentlemen, and other men of property and leisure, mostly attracted, in the first instance, by the breezy, or shall

we say windy, Imperialism on which the Birmingham statesman first floated his scheme, have grown into a genuine attachment to a policy which is going to "save the country." We respect the motives of these Tariff Reformers, but they live outside reasonable controversy.

Such controversy, however, is scarcely better adapted to deal with the business politicians who are actually running this campaign. Insincerity is, perhaps, an impossible charge to fasten on to a politician. But our impression is that most of the engineers in this propaganda attach little value to the economic formulæ they have devised, and by no means rely upon them for any other purpose than for getting votes at elections. Protectionism in this country, as elsewhere, is not primarily a political creed; it is a business scheme by means of which certain organised trades design, by using such political pulls as they possess or can procure, to pass legislation and impose taxation favorable to their pockets. No one who has studied the process of tariff-making in those new countries, such as the United States or Canada, where business forces work naked and unashamed, can doubt that a rigorously economic interpretation of this particular phase of national history is fully justified. This fact thrown a flood of light upon the position taken by Birmingham and its area of influence in the Tariff Reform movement. This district of numerous metal industries, exposed to the full force of foreign competition, has most to gain by a tariff which should secure its market by protective duties, always provided that this initial gain is not lost by a too wide extension of protective favors to other trades producing goods and raw materials. The political machine for which Birmingham is famous was excellently adapted to promote the furtherance of such a scheme. Tariff Reform is frankly adopted as "good business" by Birmingham, and if some flavor of Imperialistic enthusiasm can help to float a profitable project, it is not difficult to find it here in the home of the great Empire-builder who, at a cost of some three hundred millions to his fellow-countrymen, claims to have added a new nation to the Britain across the seas. If to this simple account of Tariff Reform we add the more distinctively political consideration that it is needed as an alternative proposal to the Radical taxation of unearned and superfluous wealth, we need not stray very far from our economic interpretation. Regarded in this light it is merely a base and impudent attempt to shift the burden of maintaining the State from the shoulders of the rich on to those of the poor.

AN EGYPTIAN TERRORIST.

THE first imitation in Egypt of the methods by which Indian terrorists are attempting to demoralise their British rulers inevitably sets the mind to tracing parallels. It was, indeed, a native Prime Minister, and not a British official, who fell to the assassin's revolver. But the offence of Boutros Ghali Pasha was, ultimately, that the Nationalists saw in him an agent of the British occupation. They struck at their foreign masters

through him. There are pitfalls enough in the way of any comparison between India and Egypt. The total absence in Egypt of any hereditary fighting caste with a tradition of physical courage, the relative immaturity in intellect and education of the educated class as compared with the best type of the Indian "intellectual," the rapid increase of wealth and the absorption of wealthy natives in land speculation and other profitable ways of improving the situation which the foreigner has made—all these things tend to make our position on the Nile incomparably easier than it is in India. There is to be set, on the other side of the account, only the fact that our coming is still recent and our title insecure. Our rule has not assumed for the mass-mind, as it has in India, the inevitability of a long settled fact, the sanction of a decree of destiny. But, with all the differences, the underlying difficulty is the same—the simple, instinctive objection of one race to be ruled by another. From that fundamental impulse has sprung the terrorism of the Extremists in India. It is probable that their example has incited the crime of this week in Egypt.

The discovery that the younger Nationalists are prepared to proceed from words to deeds will probably surprise the most those who really knew them best. The fear of some mass outbreak of fanaticism, to which Lord Cromer's school gave currency before and after the Denshawai incident, had never, we believe, a basis in probability. The Nationalist movement, even on the least favorable reading, was not a fanatical movement, despite its occasionally compromising relations with Yildiz Palace and the old *régime* in Turkey. It was an emphatically modern movement. Its leaders were men of Western education, with the usual tendency of the instructed Mohammedan to scepticism. Their demands were for a Constitution and for vernacular schools. Their one weapon was the Press. It was from among the educated, Europeanised class that they drew their adherents. Outside the towns their propaganda had made little stir, and of the genuine old-fashioned peasant they knew hardly more than did the last to arrive of the English officials. The only real risk was the growth of terrorism. Terrorism is the method of the isolated intellectual, and in India, as in Russia, he resorts to it because he despairs of rousing any mass movement fervid enough to pass from words to deeds. The thing was in the air two years ago, when the writer was in Cairo. Officials talked of it as a development which might come, if the emotional thermometer continued to rise. Students talked of it, lightly and publicly, as a thing which must, and ought, to come. So open, so noisy, so incautious was this talk, that no one who had ever met real conspirators under a genuine tyranny could dream of taking it seriously. It was laughable that young men who were, in fact, so free that they could almost publicly talk terrorism, should dream of resorting to the desperate remedy which, in Europe, has always been reserved for the moment when every other means of protest is forbidden. One saw nothing, moreover, in the conduct or bearing of these young men, to suggest that they had the courage or devotion necessary in the man who risks

his own life to take that of another. They seemed to be mere talkers, incapable even of organising an efficient party. The two years which have passed since then have only seen the progressive demoralisation of the Nationalists. They have found no competent leader since the death of Mustafa Kamel, and they were incapable of profiting even by the stimulus to all Nationalist causes in the East which the Young Turkish triumph should naturally have been. It is consistent with all that can be deduced from the history of similar movements, that Egyptian Nationalism should turn in its demoralisation and degeneration to terrorism. When in such a party the few who are reckless and keen see around them only lethargy and self-seeking, they are tempted to trust to the criminal deed which a single hand can achieve.

A notable and beneficent change has come over the spirit of the Egyptian Administration since Lord Cromer's departure. The native officials, whether Ministers or provincial governors, have been allowed to exercise some measure of authority. The consultative Legislative Council has been encouraged to make its debates more public and more thorough. The anglicising of the schools has been checked, and a National University founded in embryo. Above all, the Khedive, on whom fell the heaviest weight of Lord Cromer's hand, has been gently and tactfully handled. But, given the temper in which the Egyptian Nationalists regarded the occupation, the inevitable has followed. They do not see in all this a tentative stage on the road to self-government. They regard it rather as a belated and insidious attempt to debauch their ruling class, and to create among it an Anglophile party. The Khedive who, thanks to no qualities of his own, was rather a favorite while he stood at the head of Lord Cromer's black list, is now intensely unpopular, and it has even become a Nationalist pastime to hoot him in the streets. The meaning of the assassination of the inoffensive and respectable Coptic Premier, Boutros Pasha, is primarily, we imagine, that it is either a blind expression of resentment at this fraternisation between the ruling class and its English masters, or else a calculated attempt to intimidate the ruling class into assuming a more national attitude. Boutros Pasha, an official who had always carried out the policy of the occupation, was obnoxious on several grounds. He had a share in the Sudan Convention, he acquiesced in the proceedings of the Denhawai court-martial, but, above all, he was at the time of his death attempting to modify the Suez Canal Concession in a way which the Nationalists profoundly resent. The canal at present brings in no revenue to Egypt, but in 1967 its concession expires, and it will become the property of the Egyptian Government. Mr. Harvey proposed to extend the concession for a further term of forty years, in return for some immediate share in the present profits of the company. The arrangement seems to us a reasonable plan for obtaining a development fund which might, without fresh taxation, be used for fruitful ends. But the Nationalists are inevitably suspicious. The Canal in their minds is bound up with the occupation, and this plan impressed them chiefly as a crafty device for perpetuating the intervention of

the foreigner. Boutros Pasha fell to this suspicion—to our minds a peculiarly silly suspicion. For if it is the need of guarding the Canal which excuses the occupation, that need would not be lessened when the Canal became the property of an Oriental State.

The effects of such a deed as this can only be deplorable. It probably will succeed in intimidating the Khedive and his entourage. If in consequence they lose what little self-reliance they now possess, the progress of self-government is checked. If they are galvanised into an unnatural self-assertion, then their English "advisers" will resume in full their old authority. The choice of a policy is very difficult. If Sir Eldon Gorst attempts to work through the Khedive and the bureaucracy, he exposes them to popular resentment. If he "trusts the people" and tries to create a Parliamentary system, he is confronted by the hopeless immaturity and unreason of the dominant Nationalist party. The errors of Lord Cromer's period are bearing their natural fruit. He neglected education, to concentrate on finance. He created a foreign bureaucracy, and did nothing to develop the capacity of governing in native officials. The result is a weak ruling class, a foolish lettered class, and an inert illiterate mass. Through all these strata there seethes a certain vague jealousy of foreign rule, a partially organised and badly guided aspiration for self-rule. There is only a choice of evils. But of the evils, the lesser is, we think, to begin cautiously the development of a Parliamentary régime. Checks and safeguards would be indispensable for many years to come. But in ten years the schoolboys of to-day will be men. To create a really liberal system of education is to take the first and the longest step towards the solution of the Egyptian question. The plan of proceeding by developing provincial institutions has never seemed to us promising. No concession will placate the unrest or rally the Moderates, which fails to recognise the Egyptian nation as a unity moving towards the control of the central government.

Life and Letters.

THE TWO ENGLANDS.

WHEN Disraeli, in his "Sybil," applied the phrase "two nations" to the social cleavage between the gentry and the working classes, it would never have occurred to him to draw a sharp line of geographical demarcation. Mrs. Gaskell's imagination and keen popular sympathies were, indeed, powerfully impressed by the contrast between the soft and picturesque feudalism of the Southern counties and the bare, grim, striving realism of the new Lancashire beginning to assert its proud claim to be "the workshop of the world." But the full political significance of the contrast still lay in the tolerably distant future. For the narrow restriction of the franchise kept the control of politics in the hands of the aristocracy and the middle classes, and the profitable, though expensive, game between ruling Whig and Tory families was played according to time-honored rules at each General Election. The populace had very little "say," though the rumblings of a slow-wakening Demos in the great chaotic factory and mining regions of the North and Midlands began at times to disturb the dreams of the nobles, sporting squires, and new industrial magnates who ruled England. The several extensions of the franchise since the great Reform period, though shifting the balance of political parties so as to

make Liberalism more and more identical with industrial Britain, Conservatism with rural Britain, never made the geographical cleavage very clean and clear until the General Election of this year. A glance at the electoral maps showing the division of parties even after 1885, when it might be thought that the political opposition between the well-to-do classes and the workers had been made tolerably manifest, exhibits no plain, consistent testimony to the contrast between North and South, which stands out in glaring color from the latest record of electoral opinion.

The explanation is, of course, that the current of our politics has never run in any logical bed of clear, conscious ideas or interests. Though "the condition of the people," and the achievement of certain plain demands of humanity and justice disclosed by the pressure of heavy grievances ought, in theory, to have dominated political procedure ever since household franchise was obtained, this has not been the case. Secondary issues of domestic policy, grave conflicts due to the composite nature of our Empire and its aggrandisement, have served, decade after decade, to delay and to distract the deep moving forces which made for a division of political parties along lines of industrial geography. The slump of Imperialism which succeeded the disillusionment of the Boer War, the long spell of unbroken peace in Europe, the discord and unreality disclosed in what we may term the typical middle-class issues of education, temperance, and disestablishment, have brought to the front of practical politics with a rush a series of potent working-class demands for land and industrial reforms, for public provision against poverty and unemployment by honest and effective remedies, and for a finance which shall relieve the workers from injurious taxation, deriving the public revenue from the unearned and superfluous incomes of the well-to-do. The political field, being for a few years clear from other distracting issues, this array of working-class demands has had opportunity to shape itself into something like a coherent social-political scheme. To the rich and privileged classes, and their intellectual mercenaries, it is the spectre "Socialism" advancing to lay unhallowed hands upon the sanctities of private property, and to bring the entire social fabric to the ground. Nor is it wholly unnatural that the demands of the enfranchised workers should have this appearance to the uneducated upper classes in our Southern pleasure towns and our cathedral cities, to the West End clubman and the London city man, whose personal contact with the human factors of industrial England is too slight and too remote to protect his mind against the emotional suggestions of his scare-press.

We are not concerned to deny that there is some substance in his fears. We hope there is; for the contrast between the two Englands, disclosed so dramatically by this General Election, points to a state of facts and feelings which constitutes a real danger to our State. Wherever industrialism is organised and concentrated, upon the great coalfields of Lancashire and Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Northumberland, and Durham, not to mention South Wales, the greatest intensity of Liberalism and Laborism is found. The textile, machine-making, and mining constituencies yield, almost invariably, the largest Liberal majorities, carrying with them, in most instances, the neighboring semi-agricultural electorates. Scotland and the Northern counties in England, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Derbyshire, and Cheshire, return 175 Liberal and Labor men to 54 Unionist. Hardly less concentrated is the Unionist force in the Home and Southern Counties. Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hertfordshire, and Huntingdon are held entirely by them, while Middlesex and Warwickshire show only one Liberal seat. All the old cathedral cities, excepting one or two large industrial centres, such as Durham, Norwich, and York, nearly every dockyard and service town, the watering-places, and other pleasure resorts, the county towns throughout the South, the old market towns, controlling so many Southern constituencies, cast substantial majorities for the Unionists. But it is needless to labor the facts of

what amounts to a new political situation. In substance, it is the setting of consumers' England against producers' England.

We do not, of course, suggest that the bulk of the electorate in the Southern counties are not engaged in working for their living. But the social organisation and the character of the South are determined, to a predominant degree, by the well-to-do and largely leisured classes, who use this part of England as a place of residence and a playground in which their socially reputable sports and pastimes and their "social functions" may be conducted with dignity and pleasure. The incomes expended by this leisure class are dissociated from any present exertions on their part, and are mainly derived from the investments in industrial England or in other countries. The professions and industries which flourish in the South are, in the main, dependent upon the expenditure of these parasitic classes. Moreover, this dependence is tolerably conscious, leading, in the more desirable residential districts, to a new feudalism, in which the will and the demands of the moneyed class openly determine and control the occupations of the people, who consist mostly of retail traders, small tenant farmers, with ill-paid laborers, and numbers of small local industries supplying the requirements of local consumers. The only large, widespread industry, building, is, in structure and operation, separated from the great manufacturing and mining trades, and its instability weakens the independence of its employes. All over the South there is a great gulf between gentry and working-classes, which a class of peculiarly servile shopkeepers does little to bridge.

How different is the external structure and the spirit of society in the North! Though everywhere there exists a well-to-do class, it is largely engaged in organising and directing industry, and remains in close personal and human contact with the masses of the people. Nor does it exercise, either by its money, its social prestige, or its habits and valuations, a degree of control which approaches that exercised by the class of "conspicuous leisure" and "ostentatious waste" in the South. For the actual predominance in the industrial North is held by a force which has no existence in the South, the great associated artisan class, the comparatively well-paid, intelligent, and energetic groups of factory operatives, miners, foundrymen, engineers, and other workers whose conditions of employment and of living evoke energy of mind and educate them in habits of co-operative action towards common ends.

This new force of associated labor has been slow and reluctant to adopt the machinery of party politics as a necessary instrument for the attainment of its ends. It is only within the last decade that the necessity of a definitely political activity has firmly imposed itself upon the mind of all seriously disposed working-class leaders. The recent election discloses the first-fruits of this plain resolve. Vainly does the Southern Tory politician wave before this mass-mind of organised labor the tariff flag, contrived and colored so as to lure him from his plain path of advance. The unskilled workers in the Southern cities, prey to the publican and servile to the sway of the "hall," are won over in shoals to the protective device which represents the post-bellum endeavor to captivate the imagination of the workers and divert them from the threatened reform of "property" which is involved everywhere in the new Radicalism. The wisdom of the people, which comes into being and expresses itself through organised association, has shown itself here a powerful prophylactic. The united voice of the industrial North has even impressed the ears of the South: parasitism is, from its very nature, timid. It would take little to convert this timidity into panic. It is, however, to be hoped that timidity may yield to discretion, and not provoke the fiercer political spirit of the North. We do not think that the Government itself has yet fully realised the magnitude of this new controlling force in progressive politics, the obligations it imposes, and the new power it generates for the execution of those labors of constitutional and social reform to which the Ministry is formally committed.

KING'S ENGLISH.

IN the respectable days of Queen Victoria, it was a common reproach among cultivated circles to say that someone could not speak "Queen's English." The reproach sometimes fell on a man who, by his industry and wits, had risen from the position of workman to be head of a factory or other "concern," and was devoting the energies of old age to enjoying the greatest happiness that money can buy. But more often it fell upon the woman who had risen at his side, and now either disregarded her aspirates altogether or rose at them painfully, as a bad hunter rises at a fence and scrapes the top bar. The reproach implied that the person had not mixed with elegant society in youth, had been at one time poor, and was indifferently brought up among people careless of grammar and accustomed to some local accent, the Irish and Scottish accents alone being acquitted of vulgarity, owing to their natural beauty and romantic associations.

"Queen's English" was the standard of correctness. It was the natural language of the genteel—the people who were slower than others at rhyming "knowledge" with "college," or sounding the aspirate in "humble." Whether, since the late Queen's death, the phrase "King's English" has come into use for expressing the same distinction, we are not quite sure. We have not heard it so employed, perhaps because fastidious exactness is becoming merged in the jumble and hurry of motor traffic and compulsory education. Or it may be there is a certain daintiness about a feminine monarch that no Salic Law can command, and that a male succession excludes; just as, with pitying admiration, one may call some ill-mannered but honest fellow-creature a "nature's gentleman." But no one to this day has ever ventured to describe any woman as a "nature's lady." Still, if we spoke about "King's English" at all, it would evidently signify the finest, the most cultivated, the most correct form of our language—such perfect utterance as the little cabin-boy would expect to hear from the King of whom he sang:—

"Soon we'll be in London Town,
See the King in his golden crown;
Sing, my lads, yo ho!"

But if that little cabin-boy had been to Parliament and heard a King's Speech, what a shock he would have received! Better for him to die prattling his ditty, with his sweet blue eyes turned up to the cockpit-roof, as was described in many a melting drawing-room while the song held the fashion. Mr. Balfour is no blue-eyed cabin-boy; he has frequently seen the King in his golden crown; he is as hardened to "King's English" as a lodging-house servant is to her lover's Cockney. Yet a King's Speech is almost too much for him. Last Monday he complained bitterly of what he called that amazing piece of English. He spoke of the "ambiguities lurking in that remarkable specimen of our mother tongue"; he doubted if one passage had any meaning at all, though "it appeared to embody two quite different policies which had no connection whatever, except that it had been found possible to force them into the framework of one ungrammatical sentence." He even quoted "some unkind person" who said the King's Speech is always more stupid than the most stupid man in the Ministry, and he suggested that the grammar of it is sometimes worse than that of the most illiterate man in the Cabinet. But in the end, being hardened to "King's English," as we said, he put it all aside as a thing of small importance. "I do not think it much matters," he admitted, "whether the Government have put good or bad grammar into his Majesty's mouth, because Ministers, and not his Majesty, are responsible."

Will the Leader of his Majesty's Opposition allow the prerogatives of the Crown thus to be curtailed? Is bad grammar to be put into the King's mouth whether he likes it or not? Commanding the Army and Navy, is he to have no command of his own tongue? It is not to the measure of the most illiterate man in the Cabinet that the ideal of "King's English" has been built, and it cannot be a matter of small importance whether the

popular ideal of correct language shall be maintained. "He who writes badly thinks badly," said Cobbett, in one of his six letters, "intended to prevent statesmen from using false grammar, and from writing in an awkward manner":—

"The bad writing, on which I am about to remark, I do not pretend to look on as the cause of the present public calamities, or any part of them" (he was writing in June, 1822); "but it is a proof of a deficiency in that sort of talent which appears to me to be necessary in men entrusted with great affairs. He who writes badly thinks badly. Confusedness in words can proceed from nothing but confusedness in the thoughts which gave rise to them. These things may be of trifling importance when the actors move in private life; but when the happiness of millions of men is at stake, they are of importance not easily to be described."

We altogether deny that confusedness in words and in thoughts is a matter of trifling importance when the actors move in private life. Indeed, our chief complaint against the abuses of "King's English" is that they encourage such confusedness throughout the country down to the very poorest board schools. But certainly it is surprising that the most confused and laborious specimens of our language should be found in those pronouncements upon which the happiness of millions of men depends—the pronouncements uttered by the King in his official capacity, or issued in his name. Till it comes to "King's English," most people can say what they want to say intelligibly. The language which ought to be the model of expression has become the greatest hindrance to lucidity. The fact may be proved from all Acts of Parliament, laws, legal documents, proclamations, and many Ministerial utterances besides the King's Speech. One remembers how Matthew Arnold took the language of some Land Act to illustrate the impossibility of any genuine reconciliation between the English authors of it and a humorous, clear-witted people like the Irish. One remembers, also, that article in the marriage settlement of Tristram Shandy's mother, beginning, "And this Indenture further witnesseth," and proceeding for full five pages of engrossed handwriting to the sentence:—

"AND ALSO the advowson, donation, presentation, and free disposition of the rectory or parsonage of Shandy aforesaid, and all and every the tenths, tithes, glebe-lands"—In three words—"My mother was to lie in (if she chose it) in London."

This kind of language was, perhaps, originally adopted to avoid legal disputations arising from the omission of some rent, reversion, service, annuity, fee-farm, knights' fee, view of frankpledge, escheat, relief, mine, quarry, goods and chattels of felons and fugitives, felons of themselves, and put in exigent, deadand, free warren, or any other royalty and seignieri, right and jurisdiction, privilege and hereditament whatsoever. And it has been maintained, in order that litigants may feel they have something to show for their money, and that lawyers, like the Egyptian priests when they maintained their hieroglyphics, may have money to show for something. Partly, also, it is maintained, in the hope of impressing the illiterate with the majesty of the Law, which requires all that sonorous magnificence of time and space to express itself adequately; and thus it fulfils the same function as the judge's black cap, or the town crier's appeal for attention when he rings his bell and shouts, "O yes! O yes!"

Sometimes it may happen that a statesman deliberately falls into "King's English" of this quality on the chance that its obscurity may in the future favor his escape from some apparent pledge; for, under the stress of political necessity, what is more convenient than to slip away from the more obvious meaning into the refuge afforded by an alternative interpretation? But as to the King's Speeches in particular, we believe the peculiarities of their style to be due to the method of their composition. We understand that when the variegated opinions of the Cabinet have at last been knocked into some common agreement, the chief points are entrusted to the Downing Street butler to put together, in accordance with the established precedent that has slowly broadened down from Premier to Premier. There is a uniformity in the style that points to a hereditary tradition, if not to a single hand. In that same "Grammar of

the English Language" to which we have already referred, William Cobbett analyses the King's Speech of 1814, and he detects in it exactly the same errors of grammar and expression as may be discovered in subsequent King's Speeches up to what Mr. Balfour described as that "amazing piece of English" last Monday. "There is not," he says, "in the whole Speech one single sentence that is free from error." Yet he believed that "each of the Ministers had a copy of the Speech to read, to examine, and to observe upon."

"Though a man," he continues, "may possess great knowledge, as a statesman and as a legislator, without being able to perform what the poet would call writing well; yet, surely we have a right to expect in a Minister the capacity of being able to write grammatically; the capacity of putting his own meaning clearly down upon paper. But in the composing of a King's Speech it is not one man, but nine men, whose judgment and practical talent are employed."

Then, taking the Speech line by line, he goes on to show "what pretty stuff is put together, and delivered to the Parliament, under the name of King's Speeches." Similarly, we can imagine him taking even our shortest King's Speech on record, and pointing out such little errors as that "the establishment of the Union of South Africa has been fixed at the end of May," where "fixed for the end" should be read. Or, again, in the fourth paragraph, the words, "I contemplate this visit, when My son will have the privilege, &c.," should read, "during which My son." And, in the same paragraph, the words, "[My son] will convey to South Africa, on behalf of Myself and the Empire, our ardent prayers for the welfare," &c., imply a strange religious perversion, for, when we pray for the sick, we do not convey our prayers to the hospital, but offer them directly unto God, who is as near us here as in the next street. So, again, at the beginning of the following paragraph, where the King is made to say, "In conformity to the important measure," every educated subject would say, "in conformity with." And as to those paragraphs of which Mr. Balfour appears chiefly to have complained, it would take pages of discussion fully to explain the possible meanings of such phrases as: "serious difficulties, due to recurring differences of strong opinion," and "these Measures, in the opinion of My advisers, should provide that this House" (meaning in grammar the House of Commons, but in reality the House of Lords), "should be so constituted and empowered," &c.

If we must drop the supposition of the Downing-Street butler, we can only suppose that what Cobbett considered an additional advantage in the framing of a King's Speech, is actually a hindrance, and the chief cause of its obscurity and bad grammar. It is not one man, he says, but nine men, whose judgment and practical talent are employed. That is just the worst of it. A committee can no more write a letter than it can write an ode. Too many cooks spoil the menu, and in the multitude of counsellors there may be Wisdom, but there is never Style.

"CHOPIN VILLA."

THE name of Chopin carries with it to each of us its own peculiar associations. To some this son of a French father, born one hundred years ago this week, the exiled child of an exile, stands, by some paradox, for Poland. To others it is linked, by all the ties of gossip and the immortality of literary scandal, to the fading memory of George Sand. To the writer it suggests a prim, stuccoed villa among the hesitating trees and vanishing fields of a London suburb. A little lady lived there, stiffer and primmer than the stucco of her villa. Her grey curls perpetuated the vanities of the Regency. Her ample skirts of silk seemed always to demand a shadowy crinoline. Miss Brown had been my mother's teacher, and the elegance of her retirement betrayed itself in the name which stared in bold lettering among the drooping laburnums of her porch. "Chopin Villa" kept alive the memory of a vanished epoch, and rebuked by its sedate romance the contemporary vulgarities around it. The cool drawing-room,

with its pruderies and refinements, summed up the spirit of an age. The long windows admitted their floods of light, as though to defy the least suggestion of hidden dirt. There were chairs on which no one might sit, and tables which no one used. The wall-papers suggested the pattern of a silken gown. Wax fruit under a glass case adorned an alabaster table. Water-colors after Birket Foster hung on the walls between portraits of Victoria and Albert. On the shelves the grim verses of Eliza Cook stood side by side with the gentler romance of Mrs. Hemans. The albums and annuals in which that age delighted, "The Moss Rose," "Friendship's Garland," and I know not how many "Gems of Literature," exhaled their thin fragrance and displayed their faded colors behind the locked glass door of the book-case. Twice a day, until at last the old fingers grew too stiff and the old eyes too blind, Miss Brown sat down to the cottage piano, with its front of pleated silk. In the morning, when her house-work was decently accomplished, she played a waltz or mazurka of Chopin. In the evening, when the ritual of tea had been fulfilled and the Venetian blinds pulled down, a nocturne punctually broke the cheerful silence of that pink and saffron room. For Miss Brown the evolution of music had ceased with Chopin's Funeral March. Once a year, and once only, on the solemn anniversary, it, too, was played, the only break in a round observed as carefully as the reading of morning and evening prayer.

What was it that so endeared Chopin to the most correct of Early Victorian ladies? He had none of the obvious recommendations of Mendelssohn. He was not a Protestant, nor even a converted Jew. He had never been a favorite at any virtuous Court. He wrote no sacred music. Chopin's appeal was precisely to all that side of life which the Early Victorian repressed in practice to idolise in imagination. It was so easy to link romantic tales with his waltzes, but, above all, with his Nocturnes. Miss Brown was never tired of the exercise. If she had a favorite, it was that solemn and beautiful lament, where there occurs a ghostly chorale, which sings its muffled harmonies like the night chanting of spectral monks in a ruined cloister. The little boy who frequented "Chopin Villa" to hear her playing in the uncertain light of summer evenings, shivered with a horrible joy as she explained with irresistible conviction how this particular nocturne referred to the ghost of a guilty nun, mured up in a ruined convent, which was haunted at night by choirs of chanting monks. He has often reflected in later life that if Miss Brown had met that erring nun in the flesh, she would have drawn in her stiff silken skirts with a very decisive movement, and crossed to the other side of the road. But there is a fascination in the guilt of ghosts. One is not compromised by condoning their sins. In the brisk and orderly existence of Miss Brown, the dreamy yet passionate sadness of all this music was the other half of life, the indispensable compensation for long years of regularity and self-discipline. At her work-box, while she sorted out her silks and arranged her needles, she was of all British maiden-ladies the most impeccable and correct. The wild world of fancy and emotion claimed her at the cottage-piano, and in Chopin she found it in a form which stirred the emotions without shattering the heart, and stimulated the fancy without setting the feet in motion. Twice a day to these exotic rhythms she played in waltz or mazurka her "Over the hills and far away" with endless variations. But so gentle, so subtle, so little disturbing was the music, that she never, in fact, felt so much as an impulse to take the horse-bus into town. One trembles to think what would have been the effect upon her sensitive nature of the later developments of Slavonic music. There are martial movements in Tchaikovsky which might have sent her post-haste to join the suffragettes. But Chopin sounded no call to action. Was he not an exile, himself resigned to a life of brooding? And Polish exiles were not to be confounded with some others of whom Miss Brown had heard. They were an aristocratic people. They wore no red shirts. They threw no bombs. If they could not recover the freedom of their country, they sat down to

a piano in Paris in the politest way in the world, and expressed their melancholy in the most exquisite musical creations of our age.

It is, perhaps, because we all hear him still in the mental background of the Early Victorian drawing-room that Chopin's work seems to us to belong emphatically to the music that speaks with a dialect. It is not, indeed, Polish, as folk-tunes are Polish. It is like those Babylonian psalms, which are not Babylonian, though we hear in them the sound of the waters of captivity. Above all, it is the product of Paris in the full glamor of the romantic movement. One cannot forget that it was for the ears of Heine and Balzac, and for the critical appreciation of Berlioz, that these things were written. There is in them the conscious artifice of their period. One could set the Florentine Nights to the Nocturnes. It is a slighter and more graceful Byronism, this sentiment which is never sugary when it is sweetest, this pain which is never overmastering or mortal. The time for great architecture in music had gone by. The pride in form and construction had disappeared with the classical tradition that all the arts had simultaneously discarded. But as yet there was no great force of an insurgent message to create for itself new shapes of sound, or to restore and transform the old. The lesser dance forms were adequate for a mind which approached music, not from the intellectual, but from the emotional, side. Its triumph was to fashion from these prescribed forms, each with its necessary, its conventional, rhythm, an infinite variety of effect. They ring, to our modern ears, a little mannered, a little wilful in the elaborate beauty of their melancholy. It is as if a sigh had translated itself into the convolutions of some Moorish tracery. But it is a shallow criticism that would call them artificial. So it was that the world thought and felt in that time of hampered energies and fettered wills. The foundation of its life was the triumph of a sturdy and massive reaction. It danced sadly to its Polish tunes, because it could not march to the Marseillaise. It built its flimsy cobweb of romance round the stout pillars of Philistia, which no Samson had yet pulled to the ground. Its nerves and its fancies, its dreams and its melancholies, these were the relaxations of the orderly stucco villa, where still there reigned the rigidity of a punctual decorum. It was the time between Waterloo and '48. One thinks of Chopin and Heine as its typical singers. Both were exiles. But it was the longing for home which took them from home. In Paris they found the consolations of wit and sympathy, of love and fame, and the consequence was that they made the romantic tradition, with its imagined sorrows and its soothing melancholies. Had they stayed at home, they might have known the real tragedy of loneliness, the spiritual exile, and written with the passion and single-mindedness of a genuine sorrow. Chopin one cannot pity. Twice a day for fifty years the sweetest of maiden ladies played him reverently. She revelled in his wildness. She delighted in his lawlessness. She exulted, most of all, when she thought him barbaric and defiant. Yet never through all these years did his music do her the slightest harm. Ineffectual rebel! Innocuous Byron! George Sand shut you up while you lived in Minorca. Miss Brown chained your ghost in "Chopin Villa." That was the exile which you sought, the sorrow you deserved. And, secretly, you were very well content. But in "Chopin Villa" the Venetian blinds are down to-day. The jerry-builder has bought the site, and when next there comes round in the Calendar the solemn anniversary when the "Funeral March" was played, men shall pass and hear only the jolly ring of trowels as the bricklayer whistles some robust and everlasting melody—"The English Ploughboy" or "The British Grenadiers."

THE FERMENT.

"The field has got the measles," cries a small girl just recovering from the popular spring complaint. She is right, for it has broken out everywhere into an irrup-

tion of mole-hills. We have been able to mark for weeks the industry of that underground population, as street after street has been added to the labyrinth beneath the grass. You can see the dry and fine-grained heaps that were thrown up last week and can trace the row through degrees of increasing freshness till, if you are quiet, you can see in the freshest of all the sausage of clay squeezing from the crown and tumbling lazily down the side of the "wunt-heave." Our little dog, Guess, knows the sign well enough, and can even catch the "wunt" himself, the microbe of the field's measles which some farmers think of with unreasoned abhorrence, and others with unreasoned kindliness. The anti-moles begrudge the labor of scattering the heaps, while the pro-moles rejoice to think that the number of worms is being kept down. In truth the moles and the worms are rivals in the same good work of aerating, pulverising, and thus fertilising the soil.

The worms, as is well known, cultivate on a vastly greater scale than the moles. We have to look closer for the signs of their digging, but when they are found they are more striking than the work of the mole. The soil is brought up from even greater depths, and it is more finely treated, even predigested for the use of the plants. Darwin has estimated for us the amount of the earthworms' digging, and has told us that in ten years every particle of the field is renewed from below. If it were not for the worms, surely we should have to give our grass fields a double digging every five years, whereas our old pasture of a hundred years' undisturbed grass is the pride of the English grazier.

There is an object lesson at work in one or two town museums of nature study, that might well have a place in every village school to show more strikingly than by the light of statistics the great work of the earthworm. A glass jar is filled half-way up with light-colored sand on the top of which is an equal layer of leaf mould or garden loam. Then, in the presence of the class half-a-dozen earthworms are added and the date of the transaction affixed to the jar. In a very short time, streaks of sand run up through the mould and streaks of mould run down through the sand, and before a month has well passed the two ingredients of the jar are as well mixed as though a cook had stirred them. Yet the six-inch jar with a half-dozen worms is not a very exaggerated sample of the average field. We can dig nowhere without coming upon either the worm itself or the burrows from which it has eaten the soil and ejected it at the surface in finely masticated form. On a favorable night a few weeks hence you may see everywhere the foot-long forms of full-grown earthworms, stretched among the grass or flying back into the holes like elastic suddenly released, as the tails twitch them out of danger.

This surely makes us anti-moles. Why allow them to bring up the barren earth of underground and, at the same time, destroy by thousands daily the worms that will not only dig but fertilise? But we have seen that last week's mole-hill is not as to-day's. The air has slaked the round clay lumps till the mould runs through the fingers like coarse oatmeal. It must be finer than that for the plants' sake, and finer it shall be. Now that the spring airs are stirring we can find the first handfuls of earth that powders in the fingers to an impalpable, unclinging grease of fineness. The most unimaginative must see that here is something beyond mere mechanical fineness. It is chemical, or shall we hasten conjecture and say biological? The soil has caught life from the sun, an annual new creation that would stand for a new world from top to bottom, even if all other existing forms should perish in an instant. Here is the true irruptive principle that gives the field measles, the spots of which shall be buttercups and mauve lady's smocks and red ragged robin and blue scabious and white moon-daisies and purple prunella and the thousand other flowers of May.

Moles, one to the square lug, worms, one to the square foot, bacteria, anything from a thousand million to half a billion to the pounds of soil! In a few hours they can grow from hundreds to millions and billions. It is an incalculable saying, but something to account faintly for the fact that the soil that was yesterday lumps of clay is

to-day alive. The roots of the old trees know it, and the seeds that have lain dormant all through the winter know it. There are the wandering bacilli, whose function it is simply to transform indigestible manure into pap for the little roots; there are bacilli of prey, some eating good microbes, some bad ones and some the indifferent, and there are those waiting to fasten on some special root that they have yet to meet. Dip a clover root into the mould and they will flock to it, forming on it the nodules that, long before the microscope and the agricultural laboratory, were guessed to have the power of extracting nourishment from the air. They are seemingly there for no good but their own. A weak plant succumbs to their too ardent attentions, yet in the main it is the clover that takes the upper hand. In fact, the clover cannot live without its very ancient parasite, of which it has made a servant.

Call and call again the trees, the grass, the flowers, the seeds, and they cannot get up till the ferments wake. The bacterium is the serving maid, who must get up and light the fire before the others can begin the day. The earth is aflame underground long before the eye sees it. The scientist dare not liken the spread of the bacterial population to, say, the breeding of a flock of sheep. He cannot say even that it is a phenomenon of life at all. The agricultural chemist calls the swarming millions by a name that signifies stuff rather than numbers. It is bacterine, even broth, as though we should call a trillion sheep a broth of mutton. It is not only mutton broth, but the broth of everything that has been or shall be. It is the indispensable beginning of life for this year, just as it was after chaos. It was the bacteria, then the fungi, the algae, the lichens, that dissolved the rocks and made of them mould in which fatter bacteria, and trees, and men could flourish. So the world could be obliterated, towers and pinnacles and all, by the simple expedient of destroying the "broth" of the soil.

For ourselves, we cannot tell where the tree ends and the soil begins. After the trunk there are the roots, the root-hairs, the micorhiza, the fungi, that are stationed on the roots, and the free fungi, that mean just so much to the topmost leaf on the tree as the leaves do themselves. In a cold frame we threw down some lettuce seed. The ill-prepared soil sprouted little patches of woolly mould. Rank enemy of man this, the stuff that cakes cheese or jam left in a damp cupboard; the bloom of rotting autumn; the very emblem of decay. Then the lettuce seeds swelled and burst, and there came out of them white roots, fringed thickly with white hairs, undistinguishable from the horrid mould of sour soil. But, on another morning, the roots had buried themselves, and every lettuce plant twinkled with two of the brightest green leaves. The roots had seen to it, the roots that came from the brown seeds, that perhaps were attacked by moulds from the air, which they defeated and enslaved, and made work for them in the soil.

Even the life of the tree is a ferment, and goes on for a while without assistance from the earth. The sycamore in the brush heap is sprouting just as much as the tree from which it was cut in autumn. The little catkins of the yew and the box have grown, not so much by force of this year's awakening, as in accordance with the programme laid down and provided for last summer. The sun stirs them before the roots need be waked. The million grains of pollen in each of them have evolved from a mass smaller than any of them, have hardened and dried so that the smallest shake sets them flying in the air. They are not millions of perfectly shaped carven spheres, as the microscope would have it, but just one of the scents of this balmy day. To the gnats dancing above the yew, they may be whirling stones that cannot be avoided and must be endured. To the waiting stigmas of their own kind they are as oxygen to hot iron, the thing that is thirsted for, and whose touch is destruction and change. Then they are myriads of stately trees that would in a short time clothe the whole country further than we can see—if it were not that thousands of other forms have each the same ambition. Out of their unspeakable war comes the peace of an English landscape.

Short Studies.

THE FINDER.

THERE are hundreds of men walking the streets of London with their eyes fastened on the ground, and also their thoughts in the same place; so that things are no sooner lost than they are found. But it is of no use to have sharp eyes if one's thoughts are apt to wander.

I had often spoken to one man, but had not had any sustained conversation, until one morning he approached me with a letter in his hand, which he had found, and which he told me I could read. Rather surprised at this confidence, I took the letter and read it. But it was of no consequence whatever, being an ordinary friendly greeting from one woman to another, and whoever lost it would not have had much cause for grief. I told my new acquaintance this, and was surprised at his answer. "Whether it is of any value or not," he said, chuckling, "I intend to make something out of it. You may as well come that way for a walk, and we will return it to the owner." As a rule, I took my walks alone, so as to be at liberty to sit on seats and write, or go into libraries and read. However, on this occasion I decided to accompany my new friend.

As we were going through St. James's Park, he made a sudden dart forward, and picked up a silver pin. I noticed that his eyes were always on the ground, and I was now surprised that he wanted my company at all, for he spoke very little, and seemed quite indifferent to my voice.

At last we reached the West End, near Hyde Park, and, having found the letter's address—one of a row of very large houses—he went boldly to the front door and rang the bell. After inquiry for the lady of the house, and seeing her, he returned the letter, which she said was of little account. However, she thanked him for his trouble, and was about to close the door. But my new friend quickly explained that he thought the letter might have been of great importance, and that he had walked three miles to return it to the proper owner. Now, what else could this lady do, under these circumstances, than to thank him with more feeling, and to make the poor man a present of money?

These things my companion explained to me after he had delivered the letter. He also said that he had made quite a number of shillings in that simple way—by returning lost letters, some of which had actually been thrown away. In fact, he confessed, with a laugh, that on several occasions he had taken empty envelopes to houses, and received money for doing so. "This is only an envelope," a lady would say, smiling; "I have the letter safe." "I didn't know but what a note was inside," my artful companion would answer, innocently, "and have walked until I am tired so as to return it." Whatever a lady might think of this, she could not very well refuse to reward him for his trouble.

When we were on our way back, after delivering this lost letter, it was not long before he startled me by making another sudden jump, and this time he picked up a silver sixpence. "What a lucky man you are!" I exclaimed. "I don't believe there is one man in this large city with better eyesight than mine, and yet I never find anything." He was in such a good humor now that he became talkative, and that, I suppose, was the reason why he found nothing else.

When I became more intimate with this man, he called me one day to his locker, which he was in the act of cleaning. There were only three men in the kitchen at the time, and they were sitting at the far end. If there was the least likelihood of anyone else coming near to see the contents of his locker, it is most certain that he would not have called me. It was then that he began to show me the various things that he had found during his five years in London. And when I saw the things he had, I was astonished, for I believe the man could have made a small living by merely walking about. He had several fountain pens, one gold mounted, which must have cost twenty-five or thirty shillings. He showed me a gold pencil-case and two silver ones; also a silver matchbox, finely embossed,

which still contained the matches, as it had been found. I saw several purses, all of which had contained money, and there was a lady's silk parasol, which had been left on a seat in one of the parks, and also a gentleman's costly cane, found in the same manner. He had dozens of fine linen handkerchiefs, which had been dropped, and, becoming dirty, would be passed by the poorest people, but which this very careful man had picked up and washed—fine, beautiful handkerchiefs, well worth picking up and washing. These he had saved, only using the common ones for his own use, for he could not tell what their quality was until they were washed. He showed me several articles of jewellery, such as rings, bracelets, and brooches, and one pendant, which was a silver cross with a Christ crucified in gold, which he had found one Sunday morning in Hyde Park. Even books—popular novels which ladies had left on the seats, some of which may not have been forgotten, but read and thrown away—were to be seen in this man's locker.

When I saw these, dozens and dozens of various articles, I was amazed. "You must find something every time you go out," I said, "to have amassed such a quantity as this." "Oh, no," he answered at once; "I often go a whole day without finding anything of the least value; but there are exceptional days, when I am sure to find several things. For instance, after a holiday, I go the next morning to a heath or common where a great number of people have been, and I am almost certain to find something of value, not to mention a number of things of little account, but still worth the trouble of finding. Of course, I am always on the spot as soon as it is daylight, for there are others that do the same."

This man must have had stuff that cost the owners a hundred pounds and more—things of gold and silver, things of silk, a fur muffler, and silk handkerchiefs; briar pipes, gloves, knives, pocket-books and reading books; purses which, it must be remembered, had contained money, and scores of other things of more or less value. For nothing was too small or common for him—he even picked up the ferules of umbrellas and walking-sticks.

I was surprised to hear that a great number of these things had been found in the parks, either having been dropped while walking or left by accident on the seats. I was surprised at this, because the parks were always full of vagrants. But after a while I considered the great advantage this man had over them, being fresh and active, whereas the poor vagrants would be either lying in the grass asleep or awake, but too tired to walk, seeing that they had been walking about sleepless all night.

What a strange man he was! for he never offered any of these things for sale, but kept them in his locker, and occasionally took pleasure in looking them over, taking great care that no lodgers were near to see them. His small income was enough to keep him, and, being indifferent to personal appearance, he therefore had little need of extra money. In fact, he kept himself looking like the commonest beggar, so that people would take less notice when they saw him stooping to pick things up.

I only accompanied him twice on his rambles, for I felt quite ashamed to see him continually stooping, and people looking at him all the time. In Regent Street he stooped so suddenly to pick up a halfpenny that a very fine lady, walking behind, fell across his back. This incident was quite enough for me, and I swore to myself that I would never go out with him again, and I kept my word.

I have always wondered at such a man as this, as to what kind of mind he had. He would have no thought of the past, nor of the future, for his mind had to be concentrated on the present moment. If he indulged in the least inclination to dream, he could not be a successful finder. He would see no beauty in the trees; they would only be obstacles, like houses. He would hear no birds, and never turn his head to see what made children laugh. His eyes would not waste one second on a girl's golden hair, for fear they would miss a brass pin on the ground.

W. H. DAVIES.

Music.

STRAUSS AND HIS "ELEKTRA."

JUDGING from the tone of a number of last Monday's articles, our musical critics, as a whole, are still a little doubtful as to the propriety of saying what they must really feel about Strauss. They cannot possibly like a great part of what they hear, but at the back of their heads is the thought that, as Wagner was abused by the critics of his own day for extravagances that time has shown to be no extravagances at all, so time may show that Strauss was right in his extravagances, and that the critics who objected to them were wrong. So a number of the prudent gentlemen stay the flood of ridicule that is almost on their lips, and, instead, talk darkly of the future showing what it will show, and utter other safe commonplaces. All the while there is no real comparison between the Wagnerian case and the Straussian. All new music, from the mere fact that it is new, is apt to be misunderstood, and an idiom may seem wild or incoherent merely because we are not yet accustomed to it. But because the human ear has sometimes disliked a new thing and afterwards liked it, it does not follow that it will some day like everything that to-day it cordially dislikes. There are other things to be considered, and one of these is the fact that nowadays we are much better placed than our fathers were for judging new music accurately. They had, for the most part, to listen to it without the slightest previous knowledge of it, and to express an opinion upon it probably after one hearing of the work. In these days we can generally study the score of the work long before we hear it. To talk of hearing "Elektra" for the first time on Saturday last is nonsensical. The vocal score has been at our service for twelve months or more, and it was open to any critic to have it by heart before he went into Covent Garden on Saturday. A piano arrangement, it is true, does not tell us all about a complex modern work; but it tells us a great deal, and with that knowledge we can listen to a first performance on the stage in a better state of preparation than the Wagnerian critics could do at a tenth performance. All this critical timidity, then, is not very creditable. Anyone who had taken the trouble to study the score of "Elektra" could easily gather from Saturday's performance whether the parts he had marked out as requiring elucidation sounded as bad as he had expected them to do, or better. And, after the performance, he should be quite able to relieve posterity of the trouble of making up his mind for him on nine points out of ten. Anyhow, it would be better to make the attempt.

All but the Strauss fanatics will admit that, though he is undoubtedly the greatest living musician, there is a strong strain of foolishness and ugliness in him, that he is lacking in the sensitive feeling for the balance of a large work that some other great artists have, and that consequently there is not one large work of his, from "Don Quixote" onward, that is not marred by some folly or some foolery. If it were not for this strain of coarseness and thoughtlessness in him, he would never have taken up so crude a perversion of the old Greek story as that of Hugo von Hofmannsthal. One does not in the least object to a modern poet looking at ancient figures through modern eyes, so long as he can see them convincingly and make them live for us. But to make a play a study of human madness, and then to lay such excessive stress upon the merely physical concomitants of madness, is to ask us to tune our notions of dramatic terror and horror down to too low a pitch. Strauss, of course, revels in this physical, and therefore more superficial, side of the madness, with the result that, instead of impressing us, he generally either bores us or amuses us. We have only to look at a pathological study of human morbidity such as Dostoevsky gives us in "Crime and Punishment," so fine, so unobtrusively true to life, and then listen to the vulgar din by which Strauss tries to convey to us that a woman's brain is distraught, to realise the

difference between a man of genius and one who, for the moment, has become merely a man of talent. For the real complaint against the excited music in "Elektra" is that it mostly does not excite you at all; you are rather sorry, in fact, that the composer should take so much trouble to be a failure. For he is so violent that, as a rule, you cannot believe in the least in his violence. He has the besetting Teutonic sin of overstatement, of being unable to see that the half is often greater than the whole; and all this blacking of his face, and waving of his arms, and howling "bollygolly-black-man—boo!" at us leaves us quite unmoved, except to smile and wish he wouldn't do it. One could easily name a hundred passages in ancient and modern music that thrill us far more horribly, and with far simpler means, than all the clatter that breaks out when Orestes, for example, is murdering Aegistheus. The mere recollection of the stories of ghosts in the churchyard, or of his own fears when, as a child, he was left alone in a dark room, might have told Strauss that horror and the creeping of the flesh are not necessarily associated with noise and fury. His orchestra doth protest too much.

Nor do we need to wait for posterity to tell us that much of the music is as abominably ugly as it is noisy. Here a good deal of the talk about complexity is wide of the mark. The real term for it is incoherence, discontinuity of thinking. "The three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles" sounds absurdly simple, but really represents a good deal of complex cerebral working; so does the G minor fugue of Bach. But "the man in the moon is the daughter of Aunt Martha's tom-cat," though it sounds very complex, is incoherent nonsense; and so is a good deal of "Elektra." Unfortunately, while we have obvious ways of testing the sense or nonsense of the remark about the man in the moon, it is not so easy to test the sense or nonsense of a passage of music; and so a good deal of quite confused thinking gets the credit for being hyper-subtle thinking. What awestruck worshippers call complexity in "Elektra" would often be more correctly described as impudence at its best and incompetence at its worst. As for the more normally lyrical pages in "Elektra," there are very few of them worthy even of a smaller musician than Strauss. The first solo of Chrysothemis, for example, is merely agreeable commonplace; the theme of triumph in the finale is so cheap that it must have been picked up on the rubbish-heap of Italian or French opera. Nothing marks so clearly the degeneration of the musician in Strauss from what he was fifteen years ago than the average melodic writing in "Elektra."

What saves the opera is, first of all, the wonderful beauty of parts of the scene between Elektra and Orestes, especially when, ceasing to be a maniac and becoming a normal woman, she pours out her soul in love for her brother. There is grandeur again—spasmodic, of course, but none the less unescapable—at a hundred points in the score. It may last merely a moment or two, and then flicker off into ugliness or commonplace, but while it is there we are mastered by it. Elektra's cry of "Agamemnon," whenever it occurs, always holds us in this way. Strauss in "Elektra," indeed, is like a huge volcano spluttering forth a vast amount of dirt and murk, through which every now and then, when the fuming ceases and a breath of clear air blows away the smoke, we see the grand and strong original outlines of the mountain. And when Strauss puts forth his whole mental strength, it is indeed overwhelming. We may detest the score as a whole for its violence and frequent ugliness, but the fine things in it are of the kind that no other man, past or present, could have written—the monologue of Elektra just mentioned, for example, or the wailing themes that dominate the section preceding it, or the tense, fateful gloom of the finish of the opera. The result of it all is to give far more pain to Strauss's admirers than it can possibly do to those who have always disliked him. In spite of the pathetic way in which he wastes himself, playing now the fool, now the swashbuckler, now the trickster, you cannot be in doubt that you are listening to a man who is head and shoulders above all other

living composers. One still clings to the hope that the future has in store for us a purified Strauss, clothed and in his right mind, who will help us to forget the present Strauss—a saddening mixture of genius, ranter, child, and charlatan. As it is, one would hardly venture to prophesy more than a few short years of life for "Elektra," for the public will not long continue to spend an hour and three-quarters in the theatre for about half an hour's enjoyment.

ERNEST NEWMAN.

The Drama.

PENOLOGY AND PYROTECHNY.

"PHOTOGRAPHY" is the blessed word in which those of us who are perturbed and harassed by Mr. Galsworthy's "Justice" are recommended to take refuge. The air was buzzing with it at the Duke of York's on Monday evening, and the buzz was duly prolonged in the morning papers. Quite seriously, I am at a loss to know what these critics want. Would they have people talk blank verse in an attorney's office? Would it please them if Mr. Galsworthy's heroine disguised herself in a wig and gown, appeared at the Old Bailey, and secured the triumphant acquittal of the forger hero? Perhaps I should apologise for treating their complaint in a spirit of burlesque; but, in all good faith, I cannot guess what alternative they would propose to Mr. Galsworthy's "photographic" treatment of the theme he has chosen. The fact seems to be (though they would probably not admit it) that their real complaint is not of the treatment, but of the theme itself. They object *ab initio* (as the Judge would say) to a subject which must be treated, in a sense, "photographically," on pain of falling into sheer melodrama and convention. It is precisely because Mr. Galsworthy has invented this peculiar art of rendering commonplace fact without crudity, without cynicism, without sentimentalism, without emphasis of any sort, that we value in him one of the most original dramatists, not only of England, but of Europe. If he has a precursor, it is Hauptmann; but there is little doubt that he would have been very much what he is had Hauptmann never existed. And, while the lens of his mind is truer than that of the German master, he is also more faithful to the essence of drama. He can always think scenically, whereas Hauptmann is often apt to forget and overstrain his medium. I am not denying that, till Mr. Galsworthy has given us his "Hannele," he must be reckoned something less than Hauptmann; but, simply as a dramatist, he is also something more. As for the French author whom he most resembles—I mean, of course, Brieux—the finer artistry of the Englishman is surely manifest.

In speaking of the lens of his mind, I may seem to admit the photographic impeachment. Well, let us admit it: let us suppose it just and helpful to say that Mr. Galsworthy goes to work, not with a palette and brushes, but with a camera. If so, what an extraordinary camera it is! A camera that selects the significant, and leaves out the irrelevant and insignificant trait. A camera that seizes upon those moments in a story which, while absorbingly dramatic in the present, throws light most vividly and naturally upon the past. A camera which, though its lens remains absolutely true, steady, and in focus, is yet, by some strange paradox, quivering with indignation, and thrilling with a passion of humanity. A camera—I am sorry if the metaphor is getting into difficulties; it really is not my fault—a camera which, even in its wrath, is just, even in its pity, stern. A camera which, without a note of didactics or of declamation, yet speaks trumpet-tongued against stupidity, callousness, and cant. A camera which might easily be mistaken for a searchlight, and has all the characteristics of a bombshell. Truly a re-

markable camera this, and one not commonly quoted in the photographic market.

If one wanted to take what Bunthorne calls "the high æsthetic line" about "Justice," the reproach ought to be, not that the tragedy is photographic, but that it lacks that element of reconciliation, that final outlook into the blue, which the best authorities declare to be indispensable to this form of art. I am afraid it must be admitted that the play does not end in a solemn harmony, or in a vindication of the greatness of man's lot on earth, even in its darker aspects. It is true that the curtain falls on a speech not unlike Horatio's

"Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

transposed into the key of evangelical sentiment; but I am afraid this is only a final touch of Mr. Galsworthy's irony. No, there is no reconciliation, no consolation in the play, any more than in the first fatal accident in to-day's newspaper. It is, indeed, a fatal accident that we see, protracted over three years. An ordinary, weak, well-meaning youth is passing by a great, slow-grinding machine, when a chance gust of air twitches his coat-tail into the cog-wheels, and he is slowly, remorselessly dragged through the mechanism, to be shot forth, a mangled mass, at the other end. No crank, or rod, or roller in the system is put there with absolutely evil intent. At every turn somebody makes some ineffectual effort to relax or mitigate the crushing process; but the machine moves on majestically, and no human power can control it.

Where, then, it may be asked, is the profit or delight of witnessing this cruel, stupid fatality? Is there nothing to take the place of the consolation or elevation which the æstheticians find in great tragedy? Yes, there is—to my mind, a very real and substantial solace. There is no sentimental consolation within the limits of the play, but the play itself—the fact of its existence—is a potent consolation and encouragement. If ever there was a dynamic work of art, it is this. It is not only a fine play, but a good deed—aye, and a strong deed to boot. In spite of all the æstheticians, one doubts whether Hamlet and Othello may not have agonised in vain, so far as the practical advancement of humanity is concerned; but as to poor William Falder, there can be no such doubt. I have said that no human power could control the machine which mangled him; and that is true historically, so to speak—in respect to his individual case. But, fortunately, the mechanism of the law can be controlled by the human will; and "Justice" must invaluablely strengthen the hands of all who seek to modify it in the direction of humanity and enlightenment. The play is a liberal education in rational penology. After having seen James How hesitating whether to prosecute Falder, and then deciding for the worse part, which of us, in a similar event, will not think twice and a third time before telephoning to Scotland Yard? Which of us, having seen the Judge deliberately blind himself, in the name of "morality," to the ethical values of the case, will listen with awe to judicial platitudes which are no more than the creakings of the ruthless machine? I am told that the Judge's speech in passing sentence is criticised as inconceivable. For every phrase of it I will not answer; but in substance I have heard that very allocution inflicted on a hapless prisoner. If only the whole Bench could be taken in a body to see "Justice"! It would be a pity if some of them did not feel a new force in Hamlet's phrase about "guilty creatures sitting at a play." For this trial scene admirably fulfils one of the great functions of art, in that it places the spectator at what may be called a supermundane point of view—the point of view of a higher intelligence. He sees things in their relations and proportions with a clearness which we cannot attain in the actual whirl and welter of life. And if from the spectacle of this law-court, and from the prison scenes which follow, the spectator does not carry away some new realisation of the gaps between law and justice, between justice and humanity, all I can say is that he is either very callous or very dense. Mr. Galsworthy does not even allow

him the relief of crying out upon exaggeration. When Charles Reade, in "It's Never Too Late to Mend," placed a scene of prison torture on the stage, a critic rose up in the stalls and protested; and really one could not blame him. It may very well be that the torture itself was not exaggerated; but the whole picture was melodramatically untrue, violent, unacceptable. Mr. Galsworthy, on the other hand, in attacking a system, carefully avoids the logical error of making out that it is administered by monsters. He is studiously fair to all the cranks and levers of the machine. From the Judge downwards, they are fairly well-meaning, not inhuman, not unreasonably stupid people. They are, in fact, just you and me—just what you and I would be in their places. And it is that very fact which makes us feel that it is not those individuals, but you and I and all of us, that are responsible for the inhuman adjustment of the machine. That daring, unforgettable, three-minutes' scene in the solitary cell is, in its very silence, not only eloquent, but—it is the only word—dynamic.

As to the mounting and acting, I need not repeat what fifty other critics have said with one voice. Mr. Eadie, Mr. Gwenn, Mr. Dion Boucicault, Mr. Valentine, Mr. Pateman, Miss Olive—all were as good as they could possibly be. The court scene was the last word of artistic truth in ocular presentment. The mere construction and movement might have been achieved by ordinary diligence and skill, but the lighting showed the touch of a great artist.

When a bare-back rider has "missed his tip" in one round of the ring, he would hold himself eternally disgraced if he did not bring off the feat successfully in the next round. It is evidently this acrobatic point of honor that has inspired Mr. Shaw to follow up "Getting Married" with "Misalliance." In the former play he "missed his tip." In saying this I am not taking any side in Mr. Shaw's quarrel with the critics as to the first-night reception of the piece. I was far away at the time, and know nothing of the matter; but I assume Mr. Shaw's version of it to be correct. In saying that he "missed his tip" I mean that, from observation later in the run of the play, I believe he failed to hold his audiences. The experiment of substituting debate for drama was not, on the whole, successful; and for a man of Mr. Shaw's spirit, there could be no better reason for repeating the experiment and proving that the thing could be done. Well, he has proved his point: he has won the applause which the public is always ready to bestow on the daring performer who is undeterred by Failure No. 1; and, having wiped out the tiny blot in his scutcheon, he will surely feel that honor is satisfied, and that, after a brilliant little excursion into debate, he may safely return to drama. "Misalliance" is probably the most scintillating piece of pure nonsense ever presented to a theatrical audience. Of course, like all Mr. Shaw's nonsense, it abounds in sense, in suggestion, in thought and food for thought. Perhaps nothing he has ever done is so full of memorable and quotable lines. I will go further, and say that John Tarleton, that intellectual Captain Cuttle, is a humorous creation of the first water, admirably played, let me add, by Mr. C. M. Lounie. But when all is said and done—or rather when all is said, for nothing, of course, is done—we have simply spent three hours in an immensely diverting lunatic asylum. There criticism begins and ends: for criticism must appeal to reason, and has nothing to do in a sphere where the negation of reason is the very condition of existence. Just by way of record, not of criticism, one may note the punctual reappearance of several of Mr. Shaw's fixed ideas, such as the wrangling family and the betrothal of two people who, an hour before, had never heard of each other. These are mere trade-marks, without which no Shaw play is genuine. One comes away, in sum, sore with laughter, dazzled with a thousand broken lights of thought, full of admiration for the brilliant acting of Miss Miriam Lewes, Miss Lena Ashwell, Mr. O. P. Heggie, and their comrades, and convinced that it must be at least three in the morning instead of barely eleven-twenty.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

Letters to the Editor.

A FORGOTTEN ANALOGY.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—It seems odd that some of the obvious lessons from the events of 1831-2 are not drawn for the benefit of those who are faced with our present problem.

The first and plainest of these is that the Reform Bill was passed *after only one election specifically taken on the question of Reform in 1831*, and that the most cogent argument of Sir James Graham, in pressing Lord Grey to insist on guarantees, when he finally did, was that no second election was either necessary or desirable.

And the second, and scarcely less important, is that, as Mr. Asquith has unanswerably argued, guarantees of this nature cannot be got beforehand, but only at the time when they become indispensable after sufficient evidence that the House of Lords will not act reasonably. In the Parliament of 1831-2, the Reform Bill was rejected in 1831, and a second session was taken to pass it, but it was passed into law by the use of the prerogative in this second session and without a second election.

The Parliament of 1830, elected on the death of George IV., was elected during the Duke of Wellington's administration and not specifically on the question of reform. It was to that Parliament that Earl Grey, succeeding the Duke, made his first proposals. But the only Parliament elected on the issue passed the Reform Bill without a further appeal to the people.—Yours, &c.,

FRANCIS A. CHANNING.

February 23rd, 1910.

THE NEXT STEP IN WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—Your correspondent of February 19th, under the above heading, investigates the numerical ratio of members of the suffrage societies, first, to the women population as a whole, and next, to the million and a half whose enfranchisement would follow upon the passing of a Limited Bill. She finds the ratio, even in the latter case, to be a low one, and therefore concludes that the majority of women to be enfranchised thereby are apathetic upon the subject. Accordingly, she advises the suffrage societies to concentrate activity upon the conversion of women only, to the manifest relief of a "peace-loving electorate," and "an over-burdened Government."

There are grounds for qualifying her statement, and for opposing the accompanying suggestion.

The ratio of membership, in the first place, is not a really accurate test of the interest taken in this movement, nor of the desire for enfranchisement. Numbers of women would join a society if the opposition they expect from their immediate circle did not deter them, and many others have not been approached by any efficient advocate of the reform. That this shows considerable mental inertia and lack of moral courage on the part of these dumb insurgents is true; but movements of reform have always encountered such. The majority invariably accepts and uses to advantage the benefits obtained by a courageous minority. Victories in war are won as a rule by an army, not by a population; and the parallel holds good in politics.

To expend valuable time and effort exclusively upon making women converts would be anything but a next step towards Women's Suffrage. It would be a retrograde movement indeed. What power have women to confer the vote? None whatever, of course. Naturally those in earnest about it endeavor to influence those—the electorate and the Government of the day, namely—who have the power to grant it; and sensibly endeavor to put pressure where their energy will tell most effectively.—Yours, &c.,

E. S. HOOPER,
(M.A. (Edin.), formerly Fellow of
Bryn Mawr College, U.S.A.)

February 20th, 1910.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—Miss Travers asks the militant Suffragists to undertake a campaign for the education of the "serried ranks of dreary, idle, indifferent women." What newspapers does she read? Does she not know that it is useless to consult the daily Press for any news of the women's movement when it is of a peaceful nature? If she wishes to learn what the militant women are doing, she should read their organ, "Votes for Women," and she would then know (1) that they have been doing for years the very thing she asks for; (2) that they have now undertaken, on an enormous scale, a fresh educational campaign, called "The Mission to Women," which was inaugurated by the W.S.P.U. simultaneously with their temporary suspension of militant tactics.

Nearly three pages of this week's "Votes for Women" are devoted to reports of the Mission from all parts, and on p. 328 Miss Travers will find a list of no less than 70 such meetings for London alone, from February 18th to the 26th.

Under the circumstances her advice, though very good, is surely a little belated.—Yours, &c.,

WINIFRED HOLIDAY.

Oak Tree House, Branch Hill,
Hampstead, N.W.

February 21st, 1910.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*

SIR,—Your correspondent, Miss Travers, has been calculating the number of women supporters of the suffrage on the basis of the membership of the suffrage societies. I should like to remind her that practically every other association of women makes a strong demand for the vote. The Women's Liberal Associations, Co-operative Guilds, Trades Unions, Labor Leagues, &c., number hundreds of thousands of members, and pass resolution after resolution on the subject with unanimity.

Also, I think that it is in the experience of most active workers for the suffrage that for every woman Suffragist who joins a society there are great numbers who for various reasons do not make such a definite profession of faith. Many are poor, and cannot afford even a shilling subscription; some do not realise the necessity for combination, or are afraid to come forward, or of being chaffed. Others, I know, being occupied in other ways, fear that they will be called upon to do active work.

And very many, indeed, are afraid of their men folk. This may sound absurd, but it is a fact. Naturally, the home ideal of most women is still self-sacrifice and peace-at-any-price. They do not yet realise that the "womanly" virtues, carried to excess at the expense of dignity, conscience, and individuality, may degrade, and not exalt, the home life. Meanwhile, the agitation is carried on by a more fortunate, or more courageous, minority.—Yours, &c.,

SUFFRAGIST.

February 23rd, 1910.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—Miss Rosalind Travers argues that because the principal suffrage societies have, between them, a membership of only 35,000, the rest of qualified women are indifferent. Could anything be more fallacious? What political league of men or women on any other subject can show larger membership or greater enthusiasm? Could any of them—with all their free advertisement in the Press—fill such halls as the Albert and Queen's Halls dozens of times every year, hold thousands of successful meetings throughout the whole country, raise £100,000 in a year, and find 500 of its members willing to suffer prison torture for the sake of their unselfish cause? Thousands of true Liberals voted against the Government which cast into prison Cobden's daughter, and other noble British women, and treated them as criminals while there. Mr. Philip Snowden truly and wisely warned the Government that its downfall was more probable through its treatment of the women's question than for any other cause. The "Next Step" should be the prompt and simple removal of the

sex disability. Not only would it be a simple act of justice; it would bring to the aid of the Liberal Government one of the finest and most enthusiastic organisations of modern times.—Yours, &c.,
W. R. SNOW.

3, Buckingham Gate, S.W.
February 20th, 1910.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—The letter of Miss Travers in your last issue seems, as far as I can succeed in analysing it, to contain two main points: (1) That judging from the membership of the various suffrage societies, the proportion of women desiring the Parliamentary vote is small; (2) That "the next step in women's suffrage ought to be a campaign, not against the peace-loving electorate or the overburdened Government, but against the serried ranks of dreary, idle, indifferent women."

In regard to the first point, I beg to repeat, with emphasis, the truth which certain politicians are so anxious to have forgotten, the truth that no extension of the franchise has ever yet depended upon, or resulted from, its being demanded by a majority of the unenfranchised. The attempt to require such a demand in the case of women is one of those many instances of a differential treatment of women which make it so necessary that we should speak for ourselves through the medium of the vote. This being so, it is only needful to touch lightly upon Miss Travers's figures. On the basis of my statement that the London Society has for over a year been adding members at the rate of 100 per month, she estimates the total increase of the National Union of Suffrage Societies, in three months, at 500. Now the National Union is a federation of over a hundred societies, of which the London society is one. If the London society, alone, adds 300 members in three months, is it credible that the other 105 or so societies (including the very large Manchester society) add but 200? Even allowing an average of but ten new members monthly to each society, the figure for three months would exceed 3,000.

As to the second point, it must be observed: First, that all the suffrage societies do endeavor, and have always endeavored, to make converts among their fellow-women, and, in fact (as the London figures show), do actually make converts in increasing numbers. Naturally, however, the "serried ranks of dreary, idle, indifferent women" offer us the very worst field. Can it possibly be for this reason that Miss Travers would have us cultivate it exclusively? Second, that since women cannot give us the vote, while electorates and governments can, we should be fools indeed if we directed our energies solely to the conversion of women. That is why, during the recent elections, hundreds of women stood in rain, in wind, in mud, outside polling-booths, collecting the signatures of electors to petitions in support of our demands. The total of thousands of signatures collected throughout the country I do not yet know; but I do know that the petition forwarded to-day to the member for this constituency contained over 1,200 signatures, and that, in a neighboring constituency, the total of electors who signed verged upon 3,000. In the "serried ranks" of the electorate, not in those of "the faithful votaries of amusement," we look for our effective supporters.—Yours, &c.,

CLEMENTINA BLACK.

Hampstead, February 19th, 1910.

THE LIBERAL PRESS IN SCOTLAND.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—May I be permitted to suggest that your correspondents on this subject overlook the main factor in the establishment of a strong and authoritative penny Liberal paper in Scotland? If they recall the last attempt that was made to this end, I think they will agree with me that if ever a paper deserved to succeed it was the "Scottish Leader." It collapsed in the early 'nineties—why? Simply, if not solely, owing to the absence of support by Liberal advertisers. Not only Liberal advertisers, but, I am told, Liberal members of Parliament for Scotland, are

far too ready to patronise, and be patronised by, the Tory papers. Little as the latter affect their political opinions, they show a partiality towards the Tory organs which is the strangest reflection imaginable upon their sense of logic, not to say independence. It is no use for Scottish Liberals to cry out for a really good Liberal paper, unless they recognise that the matter is in their own hands—that the desired organ in the Edinburgh-Glasgow portion of Scotland is only possible of achievement if they are prepared to support it right up to the hilt.

"Anti-Monopolist" began this discussion by asking for an enterprising journalist. Surely he meant, in the first place, an enterprising capitalist—or two. The Liberal Government is notoriously neglectful of its Press, even to the extent of bestowing its inspiration upon a Tory paper in London, while allowing a Liberal one to die. But the Liberal cause is always greater than any Liberal Government, in Scotland or elsewhere, and Scottish private enterprise should be equal to making a Liberal paper, instead of a Tory one, the dominating voice in Scotland. Perhaps neither the Liberal advertisers nor the Liberal M.P.'s will be roused from indifference until reverses come thick and fast upon the party in Scotland. Meantime the laugh is on the side of the Tory papers which are making an exceedingly comfortable living by aid of the Liberals whom they so generously snub.—Yours, &c.,

SCOTTISH LIBERAL.

London, February 21st, 1910.

P.S.—The most interesting contribution to the question could come (an' they would!) from the Scottish Unionist candidates in the shape of a candid opinion upon what the great "Scotsman" and "Glasgow Herald" hath profited them against the Liberal organs. I gladly—as all Scottish Liberals do—acknowledge the glorious deeds of the Liberal Press as it exists: the "Dundee Advertiser," the "People's Journal," the "Edinburgh Evening News," and the rest.

RECENT ELECTIONS AND THE SMALL HOLDINGS ACT.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—The letter of your correspondent, "A Country Liberal," of February 12th, is extraordinarily true. The weakness of the Government in not tackling their own Small Holdings Act is probably accountable for the loss of hundreds of laborers' votes. The Act was allowed to remain one of the many "paper Acts," drafted to soothe the radical conscience of the townsman, and not put into force owing to the passive resistance of the powers that be in the country.

May I give an example of what happened in my county? For a year or more a little group of landless laborers had been trying in this village to get the Act put into force, and succeeded so far as to get a Government inquiry held. They had the Parish Council, the District Council, and the County Council against them. The inquiry, however, was conducted fairly and impartially, and it brought out the fact that the land was indubitably needed by the laborers. It was suggested, however, that private treaty was better than compulsion, and that settled the matter as far as the laborers were concerned. The question was referred back to the County Council, and there it remains.

The landlord's agent had opposed the acquisition of the land at the inquiry, and as he and I were discussing the question after the meeting was over, a splendid individual, who had arrived specially in a motor-car, joined us. He apologised for intruding and said he was a special commissioner for small holdings who was watching the case. "And I gather," said he, "that you regard this agitation as purely fictitious?" "Purely!" said the agent, and the special commissioner drove away in his car, his work apparently having been done. In the same way the Government seemed to think their work done after the passing of the Act. Not so the laborer.

The Liberal member for the district, who saw the inwardness of the situation, tried unsuccessfully to get a question asked in the House of Commons, and he was subsequently unseated, largely by a turning of the laborers' vote.—Yours, &c.,
A PHILOSOPHIC ONLOOKER.

February 23rd, 1910.

THE LATE MR. PETE CURRAN.

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—Something more is due to the memory of the late Pete Curran than the scanty paragraphs in the Press announcing the death and funeral of a labor leader.

Curran's leadership in the labor movement was, of itself, remarkable. Take the Gas Workers' and General Laborers' Union, which Curran served for twenty years as chief organiser. In the enthusiasm for the new unionism a number of trade unions for laborers were formed in the 'eighties, and one or two of these still linger on; but the Gas Workers' Union alone has strength and vitality as a national organisation. From the first its leaders saw the importance of political action, with the result that, from 1906 to 1910, this general union of laborers sent three members to Parliament, Mr. Will Thorne, Mr. J. R. Clynes, and Pete Curran. Curran himself fought no less than five Parliamentary contests in fifteen years. No other trade union outside the miners' organisation can show more effective work in politics than the Gas Workers.

Two things deserve to be recalled (or, at least, stand out clear to me above the rest) in those twenty years of labor leadership. (1) Curran's willingness to face imprisonment for the men he served. In 1890 he received six weeks' imprisonment for "intimidation" at Plymouth; the conviction was quashed on appeal by Chief Justice Coleridge, but Curran would have done the time without complaining. (2) Curran's insistence that what was good for the mechanic was good for the unskilled laborer. At the Trade Union Congress (1898?) Curran carried the delegates with him in his demand for an eight hours' day for the laborer.

The twenty years of agitation and organisation were nearly spent when the last General Election came, and these years had left their mark on Curran. A year ago he needed—for him, the impossible—complete rest. Curran went into the late Election a dying man. He knew that he was dying—doctors warned him that if he won he would not live to take his seat. And yet, night after night, he dragged himself out to speak, resolute to keep his end up, to fight on to the very last breath.

"If you choose to play!—
Let a man contend to the uttermost.
For his life's set prize, be it what it will."

It was this heroic contending to the uttermost in the face of death that makes Curran's dying a finer thing even than his twenty years' service.—Yours, &c.,

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

Prospect House, Hampstead, N.W.
February 21st, 1910.

THE SECRECY OF THE BALLOT.

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—Your correspondent "J. R." is perfectly correct in his recollection of the Ballot Act, but the provision to which he refers does not effectively preclude a general knowledge being gained of the way in which a given district has voted.

Rule 34, in the first schedule attached to the Act, provides that "Before the Returning Officer proceeds to count the votes he shall, in the presence of the agents of the candidates, open each ballot-box, and, taking out the papers therein, shall count and record the number thereof," and then mix all the papers together before counting the votes. "While counting the number of ballot papers and counting the votes, he shall keep the ballot papers with their faces upwards, and take all proper precautions for preventing any person from seeing the numbers printed on the backs of such papers."

It is thus easy for the agent, who is looking on while the number of the papers in a particular box is being counted, to reckon up in his head the number of votes for and against, as the papers are being unfolded one by one and laid face upwards before his eyes, and thus to obtain a fairly close knowledge of the way a particular village or polling district has gone. It is difficult to prevent it being

known which box is which. In fact, often the number of papers it contains would be sufficient indication.

The object of the above regulations is, of course, plain. On the back of the paper is the official progressive number corresponding with that on the counterfoil, which might in some cases identify the voter. The presiding officer in the booth, at any rate, has the means of knowing to whom he gave any particular paper. Moreover, if I go to vote, and Smith comes in just after me and gets the next paper, I can tell the number of his from that of mine. Other instances could easily be imagined.

Such cases, however, would necessarily be few, while the virtual infringement of the ballot which occurs under the present system is serious, especially, no doubt, in country districts. Even in towns, it is possible, say, for a large employer or property owner, whose workmen or tenants live mainly in a single polling district, to ascertain with some accuracy whether they have regarded or ignored his advice or his orders.

For myself, I do not see why the rule should not be that during the counting of the papers the backs only should be looked at, but during the counting of the votes only the faces, provided, as is always done in practice, the papers are effectually mixed between the two operations. It conveys no useful information to see the official number on the back of a ballot paper, unless you can also, then or later, see the vote on the front of a paper that you know to be the same. I have, in fact, known returning officers at municipal elections, with the idea that they were carrying out the policy of the Act, insist on the papers being kept face downwards during the counting of their number.—Yours, &c.,

K. E. T. WILKINSON.

60, Marygate, York,
February 14th, 1910.

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—At the counting of the votes at the election for the County of Brecknock, the candidates' scrutineers were not allowed to overlook the papers during the time the boxes were being verified by the ballot paper account. With the sanction of the Sheriff I had made an arrangement with the Tory Election Agent beforehand, on this matter. It was most fortunate and reassuring to our people in the rural parts.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM T. LEE.
Liberal Election Agent.

Brecon, S. Wales, February 20th, 1910.

Poetry.

SOME OLD CHINESE SONGS.

Rendered into English by David Wilson.

I.

THE ROYAL ROAD IS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

(The "Shu King" is the most ancient collection of Chinese writings, and the "Great Plan" in Part V., Book IV., of it is assigned by some to the time of King Yao. If not belonging to the third millennium B.C., it is at least one of the oldest fragments of the "Shu King." And the unknown writer of the "Great Plan" quotes with approval a bit of poetry by a poet also covered by the oblivion that awaits us all.)

THE Royal Road is Righteousness.
It's straight, without unevenness:
And private love, and private hate,
It leaves aside, by going straight,
On every side it gives a view,
For ever clear, for ever true:
And broad and easy 'tis to know,
For him who has the heart to go.
The Royal Road shall never bend.
The Royal Road shall never end.

II.

THE PRINCELY ROADS TO RUIN.

("Shu King," III., III., 2. Assigned to the third millennium B.C.)

(Air.—"The Flowers of the Forest.")

I.

I've seen the smiling of plenty beguiling;
I've seen the follies make princes decay;
Single's the bright road, the only one right road;
O, but to ruin, there's many a way!

II.

Game let them cherish; the other things perish;
Waste is the land and the princes decay.
Vice let them treasure; in palace hunt pleasure;
Certain to ruin them, that is a way.

III.

Oh how entrancing is damned necromancing!
Seeking the spirits the princes decay.
Fluting and fiddling, delightful did-diddling:
Ruin they reach in a musical way.

IV.

Carving and building, and painting and gilding;
These are diseases make princes decay.
Single's the bright road, the only one right road:
O, but to ruin there's many a way!

See "The Royal Road to Righteousness." But, perhaps, the best commentary on this beautiful song is a remark in a preceding chapter: "Shu King," II., II., 2:—

"The mind of man is restless and prone to err, with small affinity to what is right. Be watchful and steady, so as to hold fast to what is righteous and moderate, avoiding foolish extremes."

III.

THE SONG OF THE HAPPY LOVER.

(Odes.—Tcheng-Ki-Tong, in his excellent book, of which a translation has been published under the title, "The Chinese: Painted by Themselves," by the Leadenhall Press, gives prose translations of various pieces in the odes, ending with this one, and adds: "Why can I not translate the harmony of our lines?" This may be sung to the sweet old Irish tune, "The Rose of Tralee.")

The long rampart's shadow grows longer and longer;
'Twas here and 'twas now that she promised to be;
I'm held here by love, that grows stronger and stronger;
I'm restless, but patient—she's coming to me!
Behold ye the fire-colored stone on my finger?
It warms and it comforts me, feeling like fire.
'Twas she gave it me, for whom here I do linger,—
My darling, whose presence is all I desire!

Saw ye ever a flower like this rose so excelling?
So fragrant, so dainty, so perfect of hue?
There's something about it that's better worth telling—
I got it from her, I am telling you true!
You'll see, when she comes, how complete is her beauty;
For that's a detail that a stranger can see;
But O! she's so good, and so perfect in duty!—
I'm restless but patient—she's coming to me!

IV.

THE SONG OF THE SORROWING WIFE.

(Odes.—This is to the air of "Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon." It is assigned to the good and beautiful, but neglected, Kwang Kiang, the wife of "duke Kwang of Wei," about the middle of the eighth century B.C.)

I.

O Sun and Moon, that light the skies,
And shine upon the earth below,
See ye what's hid from other eyes?
See ye a weary woman's woe?
He wanders lawless where he will;
Yet never is from misery free;
O, how can he his spirit still?
And will he then remember me?

II.

O Sun and Moon that light the skies,
And leave in shade the earth below,
See ye what's hid from other eyes?
See ye a weary woman's woe?
For good he's aye returning ill,
Like one that only foes can see,—
O, how can he his spirit still?
And will he then remember me?

III.

O, Sun and Moon that climb the skies,
And shine upon the earth below,
See ye what's hid from other eyes?
See ye a weary woman's woe?
A wicked man, whose only skill
Is now a hypocrite to be,—
O, how can he his spirit still?
Or will he then remember me?

IV.

O, Sun and Moon that climb the skies,
And shine upon the earth below,
See ye what's hid from other eyes?
See ye a weary woman's woe?
Ye make me think of childhood's plays,
Ere ever I had learned to mourn;
My father's and my mother's days,
Departed, never to return!

V.

THE CHINESE AULD LANG SYNE.

(Odes.—This may be sung to the air of "Auld Lang Syne.")

I.

Upon the trees we cut, "Kang, kang."
The birds reply "Ying, ying."
Up from the shady glen, one sprang,
Away upon the wing.
See where it sits on tree above,
In loneliness distressed.
As life is empty, lacking love,
It whistles for the rest.

II.

Since little birds each other hail,
Shall men not do the same?
Need we not friends to hear our tale,
And give our feelings name?
In harmony when all is said,
So we'll at peace remain;
And so shall friends, who long are dead,
In spirit smile again.

VI.

THE HAPPY FARMER.

(Air.—"The Miller of Dee," or any similar air.)

(This is a traditional song, whereof two things can be said, that it is of great antiquity, and that the spirit of it is alive to-day. See Legge's Odes, appendix to preface, giving old songs not in the classic.)

From morning sun,
Till day is done,
I'm working on the ground;
And working hard,
Have fit reward,
For food and drink abound.

With food and drink,
I'm free to think,
And heed not powers that be.
O, what care I
If a king go by?
It's all the same to me!

The World of Books.

THE "NATION" OFFICE, THURSDAY NIGHT.

THE following is our weekly selection of books which we commend to the notice of our readers:—

"The Common Sense of Political Economy: A Study of the Human Basis of Economic Law." By Philip H. Wicksteed. (Macmillan. 14s. net.)

"Justice: A Tragedy in Four Acts." By John Galsworthy. (Duckworth. 2s. net.)

"Through Afro-America: An English Reading of the Race Problem." By William Archer. (Chapman & Hall. 10s. 6d. net.)

"The Reformation in Scotland: Its Causes, Characteristics, and Consequences." By D. Hay Fleming, LL.D. (Hodder & Stoughton. 10s. 6d. net.)

"Dean Swift." By Sophie Shilleto Smith. (Methuen. 10s. 6d. net.)

"In the Foreign Legion." By Erwin Rosen. (Duckworth. 7s. 6d. net.)

"Neighbours and Friends." By M. Loane. (Arnold. 6s. net.)

"Ritschlianism: An Essay." By John Kenneth Mozley, M.A. (Nisbet. 5s. net.)

"Edward Bulwer, First Baron Lytton of Knebworth: A Social, Personal, and Political Monograph." By T. H. S. Escott. (Routledge. 7s. 6d. net.)

"An Interrupted Friendship." By E. L. Voynich. (Hutchinson. 6s.)

"The Gold Trail." By Harold Bindloss. (Long. 6s.)

"Ronsard, Poète Lyrique: Etude historique et littéraire." Par Paul Laumonier. (Paris: Hachette. 15fr.)

"Essai politique sur Alexis de Tocqueville." Par R. Pierre Marcel. (Paris: Alcan. 7fr.)

MR. MICHAEL MACDONAGH, who is the author of "A Book of Parliament" and of several political biographies, is at present engaged upon a book dealing with the Speakers of the House of Commons, which will be published by Messrs. Methuen. The subject is both fresh and interesting, and, considering the popularity of Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," it is surprising that no work treating of the Speakers on similar lines has as yet been written.

THE subject chosen by Mr. Rackham for his next color book is Wagner's "Ring." It will be issued in the autumn by Mr. Heinemann.

It is safe to say that, with the possible exception of "Sandford and Merton," no book was more likely to be found in the nurseries of the early and middle Victorian period than Mrs. Sherwood's "History of the Fairchild Family." It first appeared in 1818 and still retains some favor from young readers, at least if we may judge from the well-thumbed copies to be picked up from second-hand booksellers, or from rather garbled editions which the publishers still issue. A "Life of Mrs. Sherwood," largely based upon her autobiography, was published by her daughter, Sophia Kelly, in 1854. But Mrs. Sherwood's diaries run to more than half a million words, and, together with Captain Henry Sherwood's journals, contain materials which are employed in "The Life and Times of Mrs. Sherwood," by Mr. F. J. Harvey Darton, which will shortly be published by Messrs. Wells Gardner, Darton & Co. It gives an account of the Lichfield of Dr. Johnson, Miss Seward, and the Edgeworths, describes Dr. Valpy's settlement at Reading for French refugees, and gives a picture of India in the days of the Nabobs and of Henry Martyn. It also furnishes glimpses of Erasmus Darwin, Hannah More, Scott, Elizabeth Fry, and others of distinction in the period. But the main interest of the book is that it brings before us an intimate picture of a class, moderate in its standards of wealth and cultivation, but earnest in social and religious endeavor, which has largely escaped the notice of memoir-writers and historians.

MR. FISHER UNWIN is about to issue "The Court Series of French Memoirs," chiefly made up of works that have not hitherto been translated into English. The first to appear will be "The Royal Family in the Temple Prison," a translation of the journal kept by Cléry, Louis XVI.'s valet, which contains a detailed account of the life of the royal family from August, 1792, when the mob attacked the Tuileries, to the morning of the King's death, January 21st, 1793. Other volumes in the series are Duclos' "Secret Memoirs of the Regency," Lauzun's "Memoirs," and the "Memoirs Relating to Fouché."

A WELCOME addition to the world of books will be Lord Crewe's biography of his father, which will, presumably, contain material inaccessible to Sir Wemyss Reid when he wrote the official "Life."

MESSRS. MACMILLAN are about to issue a new edition of Pater's works, in ten volumes, the first of which, "The Renaissance," will appear in April next and the remainder in monthly volumes throughout the year. The price will be at the uniform rate of seven and sixpence net per volume.

MR. CECIL CHESTERTON has just finished a book on the political situation, which will be published by Messrs. Alston Rivers under the title of "Party and People." The view taken is that the last election is a sign of the break-up of the party system, and that the political division of the future will be on geographical rather than on party lines. Mr. Chesterton pleads for a democratic programme, and urges that at present the real issues are never brought before the people. There is a discussion of the tariff question, on lines not likely to meet with the approval of either Protectionists or Free Traders.

A LARGE number of unpublished letters of Flaubert will be contained in the volume of his "Correspondance" shortly to appear in the edition of his complete works which M. Louis Conrad is now issuing.

AMONG the announcements of the Oxford University Press is "A History of English Versification," by Hofrat J. von Schipper. English metre and prosody have been studied more carefully by Continental scholars than among ourselves. There are several German treatises upon the subject, and quite recently M. Lucien Wolff's careful examination of Keats's treatment of the heroic rhythm and blank verse was published by Messrs. Hachette. The chief English books upon versification are Mr. Mayor's "Chapters on English Metre," Professor Saintsbury's "History of English Prosody," the concluding volume of which will be issued shortly by Messrs. Macmillan, and Mr. Robert Bridges's book on Milton's prosody.

THE discovery at Zurich of "Wilhelm Meister's Theatralische Sendung," the lost version of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre," has aroused an interest rather in excess of its importance. German authorities regard the document as genuine and believe it can be traced to Barbara Schulthess who is known to have received several manuscripts from Goethe. It differs largely from the printed text, and for that reason will almost certainly be printed.

MESSRS. LONGMANS have in the press a memoir of the first Earl of Cranbrook, with extracts from his diary and correspondence, by his son, Mr. A. E. Gathorne-Hardy. Lord Cranbrook defeated Mr. Gladstone for the representation of Oxford University in 1878, and shortly afterwards became a member of Lord Derby's Ministry. The memoir will contain letters written by Disraeli, Lord Derby, the Earl of Iddesleigh, and other leading statesmen of the time.

MESSRS. EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE are bringing out in fortnightly parts a history of Japan from the year 1868 to the present time, by Mr. George Lynch. The title of the work is "Old and New Japan: The Romantic Story of a Romantic People," and contributions from several Japanese statesmen and artists will be included.

"ETON UNDER HORNBY" is the title of a book of reminiscences by an Old Etonian which Mr. Fifield has almost ready for publication. It contains a chapter on William Cory, the author of "Ionica," and an abundance of anecdotes current in the school during Dr. Hornby's headmastership.

THE English translation of Professor Bergson's "Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness," by Mr. F. L. Pogson, which has been held over from last season, will be published shortly by Messrs. Sonnenschein.

Reviews.

RELIGION WITHOUT METAPHYSICS.*

It is a nice question whether the famous phrase, "religion without enthusiasm," be not a contradiction in terms. To this brilliant yet laborious book by M. Reinach another motto equally disputable might be applied. It is a study of religion without metaphysics. One by one the faiths and superstitions of mankind pass under the review of this clever and sceptical Jew, much as a professor of comparative anatomy may handle his skeletons, prehistoric and historic, in a museum. He reconstructs the primitive crawling shapes of totemism and animism. He shows in the most evolved and universal religions of civilisation the atrophied organ, the rudimentary tail which betrays their origin from these earlier types. He recounts the futile and cruel history of persecutions and religious wars, much as a zoologist may explain how the brown rat replaced the black. But as one listens to the daring, yet convincing, demonstration, half-hypnotised by the success of its affiliations and genealogies, one manages none the less to gasp out an irrelevant old-fashioned question. What after all of God? For religions are, when all is said, an attempt to reach some sort of synthesis of thought, some kind of intelligible explanation of the universe. They are metaphysics, informed, or, if you will, obscured by emotion. They are something more than an attempt to systematise myth and custom. M. Reinach's attitude is, we gather, perfectly conscious and deliberate. He starts by defining religion as "a sum of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties." That definition, valuable and illuminating as it is, seems to us to illustrate the besetting fallacy of the purely historical method. A better summary of early religions and superstitions one could hardly find. It includes the necessary idea of taboo, and all that may be evolved from it. It is perfectly clear that the most developed religion sprang from these origins, and never succeeded in shaking itself wholly free from them. But it is a wanton begging of the whole question to assume that the phrase which defines the egg will fully render the developed organism. M. Reinach has written an essay, not so much upon religion, as on certain continuous and persistent elements in religion. But the thing which is at the start a germ, ends by becoming a mere survival. There is probably much more truth to be got by this method, fairly and objectively pursued, than by the metaphysical analysis of the people who have written "philosophies of religion." But it is none the less a very partial truth.

It is as important as it is interesting to trace in later varieties of religion the influence of totem and taboo. It is, for example, as startling as it is probable to discover that Christian fasts may be traced, not so much to any ascetic notions of abstaining from food or mortifying the flesh, as to the worship of some fish totem, which had to be eaten ritually once a week. But this antiquarian lore is as far as possible from telling us the essential truth about Christian fasts. Mankind, starting with an equipment of superstitions, some of them stupid and childish, others disgusting or cruel, and a few capable of serving some social use or of wearing some intelligible meaning, has selected those which served its ultimate needs. There has been a struggle for existence among scruples, and it is a question whether we ought not to seek the essence of religion rather in this process of selection than in the scruples themselves. One may trace the root-idea of sacrifice, the killing of the god and the eating of his flesh, in the various Oriental cults which competed for the faith of the decadent Græco-Roman world, to an obscure memory of totemism. But the success of one among these cults was due to the fact that it presented this root idea, this world-old survival, in a certain moral context. The important fact for a history of religions is rather to expose these newer elements which caused one religion to give place to another, than to trace the obscure, primitive basis, which is common to them all. M. Reinach has done valuable pioneer work in this necessary task of detecting relics of totemism, and in going back to

the original taboo. But this over-mastering pre-occupation of his has gone far to destroy the balance of his survey.

To insist on this fundamental defect in "Orpheus" is not, however, to belittle its value as a book. It has, in the first place, the mingled grace and accuracy of modern French scientific writing, admirably rendered, one must add, by his translator. There is no straining for effect. The exposition is, above all things, lucid, full, and accurate. But the alert and very human mind of the writer never sinks under the weight of his summaries. At the end of two or three pages of painstaking history or analysis, one is constantly refreshed by some incisive epigram, some witty flash of criticism. The best chapters in the book are, to our thinking, those which deal with origins—with savage religion, with the eloquent traces of totemism in Greek mythology, or with the early evolution of Christianity and its connection with contemporary Oriental cults. But the scope of the book goes far beyond this. Nearly one-half of it is devoted to the history of Christianity, from the first century down to the latest phase of Modernism. M. Reinach writes from a fortunately objective standpoint—that of a good and patriotic Jew, who is at once a Liberal, a humanitarian, and an agnostic. His summary of the results of New Testament criticism is, of course, necessarily, but by no means recklessly, destructive. He dismisses the wilder speculations as to the dates of the early Christian documents with an abrupt contempt, and reaches a conclusion as to their origins, authenticity, and historic value which hardly differs from that of the Abbé Loisy. His standpoint in narrating the wars of rival sects and the persecutions which have made so much of Christian history is, on the whole, that of a disinterested humanitarian, who judges fairly between rivals, with a certain perception of the fact that the Church, when she persecuted, was rarely, if ever, concerned with dogma or faith, but sought only to assert her authority or enforce her discipline. Once or twice, it may be, his ardent sympathy with the oppressed rather destroys the balance of his survey. The history of the Waldenses, for example, is traced at some length, in order that the Church may bear the full responsibility for her crimes. But the gentler and more beautiful manifestations of Catholicism, such as the teaching of St. Francis or the preaching of Savonarola, win from M. Reinach little more than a passing notice, fair, so far as it goes, but by no means adequate. He is, as one might expect, violently, but not, we think, blindly anti-Jesuit. His treatment of Protestantism and Protestant sects is open to the same criticism which weighs upon the whole book. He insists, as well as one could desire, on the historical and political importance of Protestantism as a reaction against Rome. But it does not seem to occur to him that Protestantism is in any sense an attempt to explain life or to reach a theory of God. Even those phases of it which do so obviously display original thinking, Quakerism for example, are discussed in a spirit which is kindly, accurate, and fair, yet altogether external. Catholic Modernism is welcomed and emphasised as a revolt against obscurantism, which may have immense political importance. But we find no mention of Leo Tolstoy, whose attempt to restore primitive Christianity as it ought to have been, if not perhaps as it was, is surely even more worthy of notice as speculation, and at least as important as a contemporary social influence. The most serious deficiency in the book is, however, its slight treatment of Islam. We are not disposed to quarrel with M. Reinach's contemptuous estimate of the Koran. It wanted some courage, in the face of the specialists, always ready to exalt a study to which they have given laborious years, to speak the plain truth about its poverty, whether as literature or speculation. Islam is not interesting as theology, nor does it furnish a rich field for the investigation of the primitive survivals which specially interest M. Reinach. But its conservation is one of the most interesting problems in religious history, its future its most portentous mystery, and its moral influence a fact which deserved some analysis. M. Reinach perhaps hardly realises to what extent the various dervish orders (which he hardly mentions) supplement the theological bareness and austerity of orthodox Islam.

It is inevitable that in a book dealing with the most controversial of human interests, one should find much to

*"Orpheus: A General History of Religions." By Salomon Reinach. Heinemann. 8s. 6d. net.

criticise. But "Orpheus" remains to our thinking a masterpiece in its own line, and a book destined to exert a great popular influence among educated laymen. No other work even claims to attempt the task which it discharges so adequately, and we doubt whether it would be possible to find elsewhere a summary so convenient and so careful of the latest researches of scholarship even in the obscure regions of Celtic and Germanic religion. "Orpheus" was written, we gather, mainly with a practical end—to liberate the mind from superstition and fear, and at the same time to protest against the crudities of the old Voltairian tradition which was apt to dismiss religion as priestcraft. It intervenes between French clericalism and French Atheism with a calm and objective interpretation of history in the light of evolution. Such an intervention must make in France for charity. In this country it is possible that in the ears of the average reader, M. Reinach's eirenicon may have a ring of provocation.

THE CONSERVATIVE AS CRITIC OF POETRY.*

THE completion of Dr. Courthope's "History of English Poetry" is a notable achievement and entitles its author to the congratulations of every student of our literature. It is a work of high ambition, planned upon broad lines, and possessing all the authority that goes with thorough scholarship, clear and sober thinking, and the rigid application of definite theories of criticism. Its purpose, as Dr. Courthope stated in the preface to the first volume, and as he reminds us in the concluding chapter of the last, has been "to treat poetry as an expression of the imagination, not simply of the individual poet, but of the English people; to use the facts of political and social history as keys to the poet's meaning, and to make poetry clothe with life and character the dry record of external facts." Dr. Courthope never loses sight of this purpose. He is fully alive to the fact that poetry is an art, but he never misses an opportunity of declaring that it is a social art, and he is so anxious to keep before his readers the political and social groundwork out of which poetry springs, that he begins the present volume by a chapter on the fall of the Holy Roman Empire and ends it with a reference to the last General Election.

Dr. Courthope's theory of poetry, which runs counter to most contemporary criticism, though in part welcome as a corrective, is in part also an attempt to get back to the eighteenth century and to close up avenues that are now open. He is right in insisting that poetry must not be dissociated from life, but he seems not to recognise sufficiently that, as Professor Bradley puts it in his "Oxford Lectures on Poetry," the bond uniting them is a connection underground. "The two may be called different forms of the same thing: one of them having (in the usual sense) reality, but seldom satisfying the imagination; while the other offers something that satisfies imagination but has not full 'reality.'" The reader of Dr. Courthope's work is more than once led to the conclusion that, if its author does not go to the extreme length of treating poetry as an aspect of politics, he certainly looks for the explanation of poetry in the outward circumstances and current ideas of the poet's time.

This method of regarding the poet as subordinate to his environment was seen to best advantage in Dr. Courthope's account of Pope and the literature of the Queen Anne period—a period when the poet thought it his proper function to give polished expression to ideas which were the common property of most educated men. It also inspires some excellent chapters in the present volume on the exhaustion of the classical influence, the New Whigs and their influence on criticism and poetry, and anti-Jacobinism in English poetry. What Dr. Courthope has to say upon the alliance between the Whig statesmen and the Whig men of letters, and of the evolution of sentiment and style in English literature, corresponding to the evolution of political parties that succeeded the Revolution, is full of

interest, though he presses the analogy between political and literary development a little too far. But, in the main section of the book, which treats of the effect of the French Revolution, and of the Romantic movement, the principle is applied in a way that leads to startling results. Here Dr. Courthope's principles, seemingly reinforced by his political creed, transform him from a judge into a counsel for the prosecution. For him the Romantic movement is a wild revolt against tradition, a mere orgy of individualist self-expression. Just as Mr. Arthur Symonds—to take a critic of the school most opposed to Dr. Courthope—rules out the whole eighteenth century as having no fundamental relation with the rest of English poetry, so Dr. Courthope seems inclined to rule out the Romantic movement, and to hope that the nation, in literature as well as in politics, will react against "the great centrifugal movement towards a visionary ideal of individual Liberty." Each critic looks on the age he dislikes as "a page inserted by Satan in God's history of the human race." The Lake poets have, according to Dr. Courthope, life, freshness, and individuality, but, instead of following the course of English poetry "which had resembled the growth of the English Constitution in the continuity of its development," they caught up ideas from the French Revolution and introduced "a certain destructive tendency by their neglect of tradition." Their poetry lacks "the 'universal' element in the widest sense of the word, so largely present in the work of their great predecessors." Byron, though less severely handled than the Lake school, does not escape the critic's strictures. He, like Wordsworth, sang of liberty, and that is a crime which demands expiation. "Wordsworth's excessive indulgence of individuality ended in imaginative monasticism; Byron's betrayed him into moral anarchy." And, in tones which remind one of Lord Rosebery denouncing Socialism as "the end of everything," Dr. Courthope passes final judgment on Romanticism, as the disintegrating force which shattered the sober and orderly structure that had provided shelter for our literature:—

"Just as the principle of abstract Liberty has proved unequal to the task of building up a fresh social order in the sphere of politics, so, in the corresponding world of the imagination, the last result of the Romantic Movement has been a separation of Poetry from the organised course of national life and action. We have seen how this tendency is expressed in the attitude of Keats—the poet whose example, since the early days of the Revolutionary Era, has, beyond all question, been most potent in determining the development of the art—towards the interests of living society. As 'the idle singer of an empty day' to small circles of refined sympathisers, the modern poet is inclined, like the story-tellers in the 'Decameron,' to seclude himself from the vision of a plague-stricken world in the pleasant gardens of Art."

In reply to this it might be urged that "the idle singer of an empty day" was the poet of our time who felt most impelled to plunge into the dusty conflicts that arise out of the organised course of national life and action, or that, in so far as modern poets have enclosed themselves in ivory towers and held aloof from the movements of their time, they have by that very action severed themselves from the poetic ideals of Shelley, of Wordsworth, and of Byron. But Dr. Courthope is too deeply imbued with "classic" sympathies to do Romanticism justice, and though throughout the volume there are many fine appreciations of the poets who are the peculiar glory of the nineteenth century, we feel that if he doles out approval with his left hand he bestows reproof with his right. Of Scott alone does he speak in a spirit of generous praise, and his admiration is due to the fact that the personal passion which animates Scott's best poetry "is not conceived like the lyrics of most of his contemporaries in an egotistic but in a social and patriotic spirit." Following the discussion of Scott's poetry comes an unexpected though welcome chapter on the Waverley Novels, and the reader is told that, in his capacity for effecting a compromise between Liberty and Order, Scott's genius is representative of the English Constitution. Apparently Dr. Courthope believes that no higher praise is possible. That this should be the case is an illustration of what we must call the weak and defective side of his work. Its merits are great and undeniable; but throughout its whole course one seems to detect a feeling in the author's mind that there must be something wrong with poetry which, though impeccable in other respects, is likely to wound the susceptibilities of the Tory Party.

* "A History of English Poetry." By W. J. Courthope, C.B. Volume VI. "The Romantic Movement in English Poetry: Effects of the French Revolution." Macmillan. 10s. net.

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WHERE ONLY MAN IS VILE.*

By his books on Oxford and Wales, the "Heart of England," the "Life of Richard Jefferies" and "The South Country," Mr. Edward Thomas has already won a distinct place among the prose writers of to-day. He is an essayist of fine temper, and in the essay it is fine temper that counts. When we venture upon this difficult form of art—all the more difficult because it looks as easy as breathing—most of us lose our temper, if we have any. We become impatient or hurried, whereas the essayist, like him who believeth, must not make haste. We give information, or sweat in the dusty wrath of polemics, whereas the smallest grain of information or of controversy brings down the essay like a shot bird. We assert, we borrow, we repeat, whereas the essay is modest as the servant of the Lord who does not strive, personal as the pupil of the eye, and new every morning.

But Mr. Thomas in all his work preserves a temper fine and serene. We do not quite mean that he never tells us anything, but he never gives information, never wrangles, and of all present writers shows, perhaps, the least sign of haste. Though the sense of polite difference is often there, it is expressed by silence—that irresistible answer—and we doubt if he has ever contradicted anyone in words. Most of our essayists have written of the Town, and are rightly qualified as urbane. We hardly know what attribute corresponds to urbanity in one who breathes of the country; for "rural" recalls a garden city and conveys no definite style of mind, whereas "gentle," which would have expressed what we mean three centuries ago, has now degenerated into dullness, and can be used of no one but the soft. We lately described Mr. Thomas as the scholar gipsy of the time, and, perhaps, that is the best description in brief, nor do we know anyone, unless it is Mr. Hudson, who has an equal claim to the title.

In this little book, all the essayist's qualities are shown, but necessarily in brief, and not always at their fullest power. Three temptations beset the essayist who meditates the country and things of low estate; we mean the temptations to pathos, melancholy, and preciousness. In this volume there are few precious phrases, though one rather shies at "a clear, hard, percussive tone" in a woman's voice. But there is no need to criticise so sane a scholar's words, and sometimes the phrase is memorable. "In spite of ferns in the fireplace, the room was cold with a moral and spiritual chill"—how well we know that room of an intellect standing aloof from life!

"Across this tainted and condemned grass, even between the houses, trotted narrow brooklets over stony beds to their sepulchres in the town sewers."

The vividness of the picture just saves the phrase from being precious. Pathos and melancholy are more difficult to avoid. Both are usual in essayists; perhaps they are necessary to the temperament, just as humor is necessary, and is melancholy's twin. But we suspect they are Mr. Thomas's greatest dangers, and here and there he hardly escapes them. He hardly escapes pathos in "The First of Spring," or melancholy in "The Maiden's Wood." Not that pathos or melancholy are bad in themselves; they are, as we say, a common part of the temperament; but it is just because they are common that Mr. Thomas can afford to leave them to writers who have not his mastery of thought and language. Besides, sentimentality is their genteel relation, and too close neighbor.

To us there are two essays in this volume that show the writer at his best—"Mothers and Sons," and "At a Cottage Door." They are the longest; they come side by side in the middle of the middle of the book (where the heaviest weight should always come in every Eight, and here we have eight essays, and a cox in the stern), and they have the most "stuff" in them. Both treat of the clash of feelings and realities that arises now in so many country parts of England; or rather, in this instance, of Wales, for Mr. Thomas is writing throughout of his own country. Both describe the squalid hideousness of town life—especially of a mining town's life—encroaching upon the purity and health of the old farms and hillside fields. But in these essays it is not merely a matter of lost picturesqueness. We have given up the

beauty of the country in despair. Let it go. We are willing to seek a new kind of beauty now in chimneys and smoke and festering drains. It is the spiritual loss—the loss of Wordsworth's "grave livers"—that matters, and Mr. Thomas reveals a new meaning in that loss by contrasting the educated poet son with his ordinary and unconscious mother, occupied with the common, necessary toil of life. It is the son who laments with infinite tears of rhyme over the pollution of the river or the desecration of natural beauties. The mother takes things pretty much as they come, knowing the hard needs of existence:—

"I am sorry the fern will have to go," she says, "but, dear me, the poor of us must have shoes and bread and a pasty now and then, Mr. Phillips, and the rich must have their carriages and money to buy the poetry books, Willy." . . . I never saw a sweeter and nobler acceptance of life (the author continues). She welcomed the new without forgetting the old, and gave both their due because she felt—she would never have said it, for she would have considered such high thinking arrogant—that the new and the old, the institutions, the reforms, the shops, the drainage system, were the froth made by the deep tides of men's inexpressible perverse desires.

Yet, though she accepts the mills and mines and drains without lamentation, and, indeed, with an eye to their service, we feel that it is her heart which is the nearer to nature, being, in fact, the chief part of nature's beauty; whereas her son has no real intimacy with natural existence at all, and it is his room that is cold with a moral and spiritual chill.

We have all felt that chill of self-consciousness, of the literary spirit—how deadly a touch it lays upon the daily realities that men and women have somehow to face. And all know how the mere sight of that continued struggle under the pressure of reality shrivels the pretensions of poetising and words. No one could doubt which had the finer soul—the poet or the woman who remarked that her frying-pan had fried forty pigs—and the evil of the encroachment of the mining town upon the mountain farms lies, not in the ruin of natural scenery, but in the extinction of the life that could breed people like the poet's mother, and the substitution of creatures "small, grey-skinned, with clotted grey hair; they had scarred faces, had lost an eye and most of their teeth; they wore soiled print or black dresses, bedraggled like the plumage of a dead bird in the mud."

"One such crone," the description of the town people continues, "one such crone crawling out into the light, unclean, dull, and yet surprised, had a look as if she had just been exhumed; she might have been buried alive in the foundation of the town for luck, and have now emerged to see what had been done. They were seen outside the taverns with their hands hidden under the remains of aprons, or were queuing in the dustbins for food or unbroken glass; often they carried babies, in whose shapeless faces was hidden the power to excel their grandmothers."

That passage comes from the other essay we spoke of, describing how a Welsh farmer's wife (whose only English words were "Good-afternoon," "beautiful," and "excursion train") would sit at her cottage door and watch the flights of birds, especially the swifts, with a kind of half-belief that they embodied the departed souls, especially the souls of the crowding town below her hillside. Well, the embodiment of those dismal souls into swifts screaming through the air to their nests under cottage eaves would be a blessed transformation!

THE GREAT MIMIC.*

DIFFICULT as it is to weigh the merits of a bygone actor or enter into the feelings of those who saw his successes, it is harder still to appreciate the jester of an age preceding our own. Manners change; and what passed for a happy stroke in one generation may seem downright rudeness to the next. The jester, moreover, depends so much for effect upon all the circumstances of the occasion, upon tone and gesture, that his best things are, in their nature, transient. They are—

"like the snowfall in the river,
A moment white, then melts for ever."

The finest qualities of a good joke, as of a good speech, are condemned to perish in the using.

From this point of view it is natural that Mr. Percy Fitzgerald should expect his readers to deny his claim

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that his hero was "the most remarkable and one of the most gifted persons that ever figured on the English stage." Yet the claim does not overstep the truth. All his contemporaries unite in bearing witness to Foote's vogue and to the mixture of admiration and alarm he aroused. "Upon my word," wrote Horace Walpole, "if Mr. Foote be not check'd, we shall have the army itself, on its return from Boston, besieged in the Haymarket." "There is hardly a public man in England," said Davies, "who has not entered Mr. Foote's theatre with an aching heart, under the apprehension of seeing himself laughed at." Even Johnson, who tempered his admiration with criticism, felt constrained to admit that for "loud, obstreperous, broad-faced mirth" he knew not Foote's equal.

Foote's father, "a very useful magistrate," of the town of Truro and member of Parliament for Tiverton, intended his son for the legal profession. He sent him to Worcester Grammar School where—like so many other boys destined for eminence—he was the leader in a "barring-out," and afterwards to Worcester College, Oxford. He left Oxford without taking a degree, though with some reputation for scholarship, and first appeared before the world as the author of a Newgate Calendar pamphlet recounting the history and "last dying words" of one of his uncles, Captain Goodere, who had just been hanged for murdering another uncle. We next find him upon the stage, playing the part of Othello without success, and afterwards essaying that of Lord Foppington in "The Relapse," which was also a failure. Mortified but not dismayed, he determined to try something else. "If they won't have me in tragedy, and I am not fit for comedy, what the deuce am I fit for? I must find some other department for which I am fit," was his summary. He found it in mimicry, writing his own pieces, which had little plot and depended for their success on his skill in caricaturing the leading personages of the day. The form of entertainment was not entirely new. Fielding, in "Pasquin" and other pieces, had introduced Ministers upon the stage, but Walpole, who had felt the satire, passed the Licensing Act of 1737 and brought the stage under the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain. Though during his career Foote had on two or three occasions to abandon pieces which he had in rehearsal, he seems upon the whole to have experienced little trouble from the Censor. He called his entertainments "giving tea," and affected to receive his friends on a footing of social intercourse. After a time even this thin pretence was dropped. His audacity had conquered, and whether through fear or favor, the authorities made hardly an effort to suppress him.

The town talked of these entertainments, and Foote promptly became the most feared and the most flattered man in London. Mr. Fitzgerald blames him for want of dignity and of restraint. Neither the one nor the other was to be expected from Foote. He is to take or to leave—a genius in his own line, but that a line where the delicate mind hesitates to follow him. The mimicry of living persons, extending even to that of their physical misfortunes, and the public exposure of the most private details of their lives would not be tolerated to-day, yet down to the time of George IV. it was thought a social accomplishment of distinction, and Croker tells us how that monarch used to sit up in bed mimicking his late Ministers for the enjoyment of their successors. Three of his distinguished contemporaries—Goldsmith, Churchill, and Johnson—escaped Foote's lash. Goldsmith's immunity is difficult to understand, for his eccentricities invited such an attention, but in the case of the other two fear was the restraining influence. Churchill wielded a stinging pen and satirised Foote, without severity, indeed, but in such a way as to show he must not be trifled with. Johnson's defence was on cruder lines. Being told at the house of Davies, a bookseller, that Foote intended to ridicule him, he asked "what was the common price of an oak stick," and when informed that it was sixpence, replied, "Why, then, sir, give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity." At the same time, Johnson heartily enjoyed Foote's humor. "Garrick," he said to Boswell on the Hebridean tour, "is restrained by some principle, but Foote has the advantage of unlimited range. Garrick has some delicacy of feeling; it is possible to put him out; you may get the better of him. But Foote is the most incompressible fellow I ever knew; when you have

driven him into a corner, and think you are sure of him, he runs between your legs or jumps over your head, and makes his escape." "Incompressible" is the right word for Foote.

Foote's recorded witticisms would fill volumes, and "Conversation" Cooke's "Table-Talk and Bon-mots" consists of little else. Mr. Fitzgerald says that his best-known jest is his reply to someone asking whether he had ever been to Cork: "No; but I have seen a good many drawings of it." It is a good repartee, though we think the following still better. "He described a certain Sir J. D. as 'a good sort of man,' and being pressed by a lady to explain what he called a good sort of man, 'Why, madam,' he said, 'one who preserves all the exterior decencies of ignorance.'" Of course, the most famous story told of Foote is that of the "nonsense" speech. Macklin had been holding forth at a lecture on methods of strengthening the memory by repeating strings of words, and boasting that he could repeat immediately what he had once read. Foote is said to have at once written down the following, challenging the lecturer to get it by heart on the spot:—

"So she went into the garden to cut a cabbage-leaf to make an apple-pie, and, at the same time, a great she-bear, coming up the street, pops its head into the shop. 'What, no soap!' So he died, and she very imprudently married the barber; and there were present the Picinnies and the Jobillies and Garolillies and the Grand Panjamdrum himself, with the little round button at the top, and they all fell to playing the game of Catch-as-catch-can till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots."

It is doubtful whether this piece of incongruous humor was spontaneous, but it is a classic of its kind.

Mr. Fitzgerald's book is not free from repetitions, nor is the arrangement always the best, but it is thoroughly readable, and gives a fair picture of one of the greatest of English jesters.

STORIES OF EAST AND WEST.*

The descriptions in "The Human Cobweb" are so good that it is a pity the novel as a whole is not better. Mr. Putnam Weale has gained a firm reputation by his brilliant books on the Far East, and now, in this "Romance of Old Peking," he brings before us the China of 1898, as it appeared to the eyes of Europeans, on the eve of the *coup d'état* by the Dowager Empress, and the attack on the European Legations. Like many a clever man before him, Mr. Weale has not quite understood that the novel is one of the most complex and exacting forms of art, necessitating a most skilful handling of character, and an instinct for proportion, balance, and concentration in the arrangement of the narrative. He has sought to enhance his matter by creating the machinery of a regulation plot, in which intriguing European concession-hunters, backed by big financial houses at home, are shown against the barbaric background of Peking's seething life. But to present with dexterity and force this big international picture, in which the great Powers are seen putting greedy fingers into the Chinese pie, would tax the powers of a Zola. Mr. Putnam Weale has been too ambitious. What really counts in his picture is the vivid feeling imparted of the Asiatic atmosphere of the great Tartar city, and of the crumbling Manchu dynasty. All the "information" dispensed to us, in the shape of Legation tittle-tattle and diplomatic tappings of the political barometer, clashes inartistically with the sharp impression made on the nerves by this rich barbaric pageant of Asiatic life.

We may pass over the first five chapters, which set forth how Peter Kerr, the rising young engineer, persuaded the great banker, Sir Peter Lindley, and his syndicate to back his scheme of the Linked Chinese Trunk Lines, and send him out to Peking to obtain the concession. The "love interest" of the story is introduced in these pages, one which has so little to do with the main theme that the two ladies concerned are packed off by the author on a voyage to Japan in the last chapters, in order that they may turn up in China and contrive a sentimental ending! Such clumsy art defeats the author's purpose. Equally irritating is the subsidiary love intrigue in which Peter Kerr falls a victim to the wiles of the wife of the rival Belgian concession-

* "The Human Cobweb." By B. L. Putnam Weale. Macmillan. 6s.

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hunter, Madame Boisragon, who steals the engineer's papers, and so brings the syndicate's projects to naught. Much better drawn are the character sketches of Carnot, the cynical Swiss who keeps the hotel where the concession-hunters foregather, and of Lorenzo, the Italian, who shows Kerr the ropes, and teaches him how to bribe the Chinese dignitaries. The interview with the high Manchu Prince, in Chapter XVIII., when the interpreters discreetly withdraw and the Prince examines the Englishman's cheque and then slips it into his cloth boot, is subtle in humor. But it is by the brilliant descriptions of the Peking streets and the surrounding landscape that the author discloses exceptional powers. These scenes have a cumulative effect on the reader, and must be read leisurely, if their true flavor is to be enjoyed. We quote, however, a typical passage:—

"Then on the high driving-road the reason of the *sauve qui peut* was made clear. Soldiers were coming—many soldiers evidently.

"Slashing about them with their short riding-whips and riding recklessly was a confused mass of savage-looking cavalry, who from their looks might have been Genghis Khan's horsemen revived from the dead. Their black turbans folded low down, and half-masking their bronzed faces, their loose tunics of crimson cloth, edged with black velvet, their tiger-skirts of the same brilliant coloring, which they wore over their legs—all these things were strangely barbaric and strangely threatening. Each man had a carbine slung on his back, and a heavy curved sword at his side, whilst some had bandoliers of cartridges and others none. Mixed together, and yet preserving instinctively the curious formation of irregular cavalry—the cavalry which lumps its horses as closely as possible in knots of dissimilar size—they presented a remarkable spectacle. . . . They now saw advancing a dense mass of these picturesque horsemen, with a group of great black and yellow banners flaunting high above them. There were perhaps a dozen of these huge barbaric triangular flags, hanging down so low that they literally draped their bearers and their bearers' ponies. The tramp of so many countless hoofs raised great clouds of dust, which floated ever more densely, and at times almost completely enveloped the long lines of men and animals. In the brilliant light flooding the roadway and catching the violent red of the men's tunics—with the gaudily painted shop-fronts framing it all—it made a wonderful morning scene.

"For a while this host advanced like this in stern silence. . . . Suddenly the music began—a music which once heard can never be forgotten. Beginning to blow irregularly, the trumpeters first touched a high note and held it in long, quavering, mournful, thrilling blasts—blasts which were constantly reinforced by the music of other trumpeters, who, joining in this strange chorus as they felt inclined, made the volume of sound rise and sink in a blood-tingling manner."

Another admirable description recounts with much nervous force the attack of an enraged Chinese mob on English tourists who have interfered to save from execution by drowning a luckless couple of sinners against village law. The author has the art of steeping his scenes in historical coloring, so that we obtain a most suggestive picture of the immense antiquity of the Chinese civilisation. It is too late to ask Mr. Weale to recast his story; but if he is in search of an artistic model on which to frame any future impressions of Eastern life, he could not do better than take M. Pierre Loti's "*L'Inde sans les Anglais*."

In "*Such and Such Things*" Mr. Mark Allerton has made a minor hit with a novel that, we trust, will be appreciated north of the Tweed. The hero, David Logan, the son of a canny linen draper in the Gorbals, Glasgow, being "anxious tae get on," procures a situation as a minor clerk in the London house of Cardigan, Sons, and Johns, Limited, wholesale drapers. The ruthless but diverting description of the process by which David slowly pushes his way to the front, guided by the maxim, "ambecation and moderation will carry ye onywhere," might seem a little satirical to the softer southerner, but its psychological truth is indisputable. David never loses an opportunity, and when he has found one "he holds on to it like grim death and with tireless energy." He plods, he keeps on doing things—little things—and always keeps his eyes fixed on the man in front of him. He falls in love with the charming girl, Miss Barker, a typewriter in his office, but when, owing to Mr. Cardigan's sudden illness, he becomes, practically, the manager of the firm, he instantly perceives that he must not do anything to blight his prospects, and so Miss Barker must be got rid of. Slowly he matures his cautious plan, and on the day that the staff is reduced, when two typists and Miss Barker get a week's notice, David travels north and does not return for ten days. And when Mr. Cardigan offers him a partnership, and the handsome daughter, Esmé

Cardigan, takes notice of him, David is still the hard man of business: "It was not a bad catch! And she would have money, too. But he determined not to be in too big a hurry. He wasn't going to let himself go too cheap." Equally grim is the analysis of David's relations with his old parents. He is fond of them, but never gives himself away. "Ye'll be makin' a lot o' money," inquires his father. "A bitty," said David, cautiously. "Whiles more than at other times." So David prospers and prospers, and when his employer dies he matures his plans. Nobody save himself shall have a say in the firm's management. He travels down to Eastbourne after a year's cautious waiting to propose marriage point-blank to Esmé. But Mrs. Cardigan tells him that her daughter will not have him, because she is in love with another man. So David takes another road to reach his goal. The end is admirable in its irony. Esmé, when she enters, indignantly stops David's long-winded explanations. "I know what you are going to say. Well, I'm glad to finish it now and for ever," she bursts out:—

David suddenly laughed. Esmé flushed crimson with shame and mortification, and he laughed again.

"Yes," he said; "you are extraordinary. There's no mistake about it. I've never heard anything so extraordinary in my life. Man! but it's funny, too."

He laughed again. "It's terrible funny."

"What on earth do you mean?" Esmé turned paler. She clenched her hands with a sudden apprehension.

"I mean, I wasn't going to propose to you at all. You mistook me entirely. You were a bit too previous. Ha! ha! ha! But it's terribly funny. The fact is—" He cleared his throat. Esmé was staring at him with fascinated eyes. She would have liked to have swept away his grin of triumph with a blow of her hand. "The fact is, it was your mother I proposed to."

"And she—?" Esmé panted.

"Aye, she accepted me. I'll be your stepfather soon, Esmé."

BOOKS IN BRIEF.

THE object of Mr. E. J. Bedford's "*Nature Photography for Beginners*" (Dent, 7s. 6d. net), is to show how one may begin photography and nature study simultaneously, and combine the two in one wholesome and comparatively inexpensive recreation. There was certainly room for a book of this class, for the best known publications on the subject, while they have revealed nature photography as a fascinating hobby, have also suggested the great difficulty in the way of the ordinary person taking it up. Results such as those achieved by the brothers Kearton and Mr. Oliver Pike have seemed to demand a degree of skill, endurance, and opportunity that prohibited the average student from any attempt at rivalry; whereas Mr. Bedford's book proves how, with quite normal intelligence, patience, and care, one can extract a large amount of enjoyment and instruction from the pursuit, at but little cost, by confining one's attention to simple and accessible subjects. He takes his reader for a series of Saturday afternoon walks with a camera in his own neighborhood; instructs him as to what "nature" to look for, and how to photograph it when found; and—what is especially valuable—demonstrates the advantages of stereoscopic photography to the operator who aims at strong results. Nearly a hundred stereoscopic pictures of his own are reproduced in this volume, and they make an illuminating record of his achievements. The book opens with a description of suitable apparatus for the work, and essentials such as a long focus camera, a good lens, and a noiseless shutter are insisted upon. An account of the photographic processes follows, which errs only in being a trifle too lengthy; we are then introduced to the "excursions," which chapters contain much sage advice and a quantity of information on the ways of birds and the fashion of their nests, on the beasts of the field and farmyard that offer themselves as subjects, and on insects and flowers. One chapter gives several entertaining facts and photographs relating to birds' nests found in such unexpected places as a drawing-room mantelshelf, a schoolroom curtain, an old hat, and so forth. Mr. Bedford has essayed a large field of nature observation, and the intimacy and enthusiasm displayed in his pages mark him as a worthy disciple of Gilbert White and other famous predecessors.

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In the City excitement is divided between the financial and political deadlock at Westminster on the one hand, and the boom in rubber and oil shares on the other. Another general election would be most unpopular. Most City men are quite willing now that the Budget shall pass, however desperately they battled against it a few weeks ago. Trade prospects are too good now to make Tariff Reform a going concern in the minds of business men. The money situation is puzzling, simply because no one knows what the Government will do or how much it will need in short loans to tide over the crisis. The market made quite a mistake over the one month Treasury bills. After the financial year it is probable that a large amount will be borrowed in six months' bills, and a pretty big issue of Exchequer bonds is also predicted. It all depends on the question how soon the Budget can be passed and the Income tax regularised. The comic element is that the Irish Nationalists by their line against the Budget are simply postponing the day when our wealthy men shall pay their share to Old Age Pensions. Meanwhile, apart from oil and rubber, the stock markets are rather quiet. Argentine railways have been going down on well-informed selling. The foreign market is rather interesting. Several City loans—St. Petersburg, Constantinople, and Copenhagen, in particular—are being arranged, and there is talk of a Peruvian Corporation reconstruction in Paris which has sent up the loan a good deal. The American market is dead, the operations of the New York bankers being regarded with much suspicion, though prices are much lower than last November, when inspired journalists were booming American railroad and securities.

THE BUDGET.

There is much curiosity in the City about the Budget. Is it going to be postponed to the Greek Kalends? I am told that the drink interest in London is pulling many strings to bring "whisky" and "beer" pressure upon the Irish Nationalists, so that the Budget may be rejected. The result if they succeed will be heavy loss to Ireland, for the higher rates on income-tax and death duties are just the revenues to which Ireland contributes least, and the sums paid in whisky and other customs duties can never be returned, as they have been passed on to the consumers. There is nothing in English law to make a Budget necessary. If no income-tax is required, forty or fifty millions could be raised annually by loan. But the effect on national credit will be tremendous, and Ireland will smart first, because of the constant issues of Irish land stock. Ireland only contributes about 4 per cent. to the new revenue, while it gets more than a quarter (25 per cent.) of the new expenditure.

RUBBER AND OIL.

To the rubber boom the Stock Exchange has added an oil boom for some mysterious reason. It is supposed that oil is being more and more used for fuel, and that the oil producing companies are likely to make great profits. I should fancy that speculation in this line is likely to prove unfortunate. Rubber share prices have also reached a very dangerous point, even allowing that the high price of rubber makes rubber production fabulously profitable. The remarkable thing is that these prices do not seem to check consumption very much—possibly because it is largely required for the luxuries of the rich. People argue now that if the price falls a little the use of rubber for such purposes as paving streets will become quite common. However that may be, London must have made many fortunes out of rubber during the last two or three years. Most of the share business is transacted in Mincing Lane. The Stock Exchange list of rubber shares is quite small. Some of the Mincing Lane brokers have two departments—one for rubber, the other for rubber shares.

A "SCIENTIFIC" TARIFF.

I have always held that there is no such thing as a "scientific" tariff. The impartial expert never has been

the framer of a Protectionist tariff, and never will be. It is a case of influence. The strongest and most unscrupulous interest always gets the pull. The weaker goes to the wall, and the poor are always fleeced. Just now a "scientific" tariff is being concocted by the Japanese Government. We see it in the making in an interview, recently published by the "Asahi," with M. Sakurai, director of the Tariff Bureau. The general object of the tariff is, of course, to increase Protection; but the director has a very peculiar set of arguments, which leave the mind in a delightful state of bewilderment. Let me reproduce some of his remarks:—

"The total amount of iron turned out in Japan is only sufficient to supply one-fifth of the demand, and all the remainder has to be imported. Some persons are of opinion that the tariff on iron should be increased for the encouragement of the home industry, but this view is altogether wrong. In these days of industrial expansion, iron, the most necessary material for manufacturing industries, must be supplied as cheaply as possible. With this end in view the present statutory rate of 30 per cent. has been reduced to 15 per cent. with regard to iron rods and bars, wire rods, &c."

As a matter of fact, however, this is not a decrease at all but an increase, as these goods are at present subject to duties of only 10 to 7½ per cent. by virtue of Conventional arrangements! So M. Sakurai's argument is in direct conflict with his proposals. Let us now turn to what he says about machinery and other manufactures of iron, &c.:—

"Many of those who are interested in manufacturing industry insist that on machinery and other goods manufactured of iron and other metals duties higher than those on the raw metals should be imposed. It is argued, for instance, that if a duty of 15 per cent. is imposed on iron it is only reasonable that a duty of 25 or 30 per cent. should be imposed on machinery. This view, however, is not sound when the undeveloped state of the manufacturing industry of the country is taken into consideration, and when it is remembered that Japan stands badly in need of cheap productive machinery. For this reason it has been decided to impose only light duties of from 15 to 20 per cent. on locomotive engines, machinery, &c."

If cheapness of production were the end in view, of course machinery, coal, clothing, and the food of the operatives would come in free.

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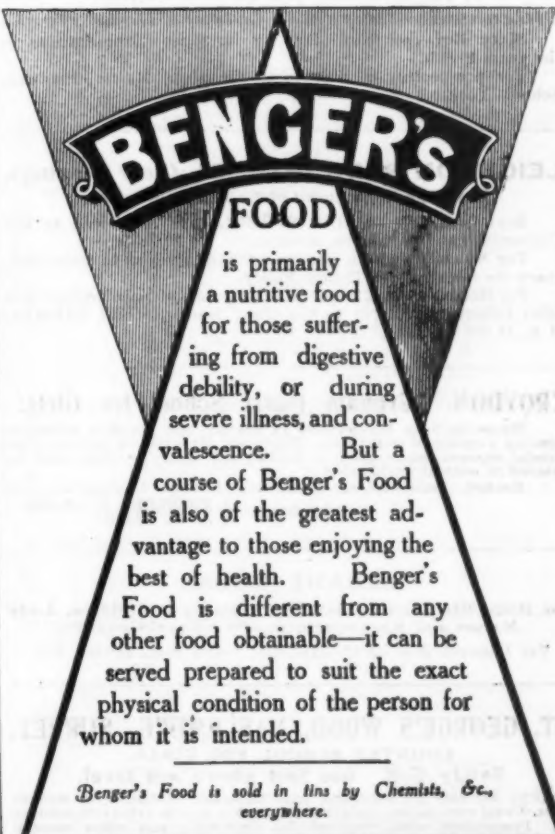
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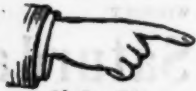
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1650.

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